

STALIN'S RUSSIA

The Constitution, glorified, violated

Communist Party, dominant, unique

Stalin in all his guises

Justice, G.P.U., bureaucracy, Red Army

Propaganda, intellectual regimentation

Condition of workers, women, children

Morals, manners, customs

Foreign policy, comintern, 5th columns

Concentration camps, occupied countries

BY S. LABIN · INTRODUCTION

BY ARTHUR KOESTLER



This book constitutes perhaps the most complete summing up, and at the same time the best substantiated indictment, of the Soviet régime that has yet been written. It is neither the eye-witness account of the tourist nor the memoirs of the ex-resident, nor again the specialist study of the economist: it is a synthesis of all three, supported by a mass of documentary evidence drawn from official Soviet sources. The result is a picture of Soviet life which is complete, living and faithful.

The author discusses every aspect of the régime. The Constitution, at once glorified and violated; the Communist Party, unique and dominant; Stalin in all his guises; justice and the secret police; the bureaucracy and its privileges; the Red Army; the propaganda machine, which manipulates almost biologically the minds of the people; the living conditions of the workers; the graveyard of socialist ideals; morals, manners and customs; the position of the women and children; the intellectual regimentation; the concentration camps and the terror—which the author believes to have claimed, as early as 1940, 17,000,000 victims; the foreign policy of Soviet imperialism and the treatment of the occupied countries; the Communist International and the “fifth and sixth columns”.

In discussing these themes, the author's aim is to present the facts with the greatest possible objectivity. That is not to say, however, that she makes any attempt to conceal her conviction that

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the Stalinist régime is an extremely dangerous one. In her own words, "I hope I have *shown objectively* that Stalinism is tyrannical, and *pleaded passionately* that tyranny is an evil."

The author also sets herself to give a convincing answer to the question, so often asked and so rarely answered, *What is the real nature of the Soviet régime?*

The evidence Madame Labin brings forward to support her indictment of the Soviet régime is overwhelming. There is an immense wealth of quotation and of detailed evidence, compiled from wider sources than can usually be claimed, and presented with an impressive urgency. At the same time her book is extremely readable.

The audacity of the new Moscow imperialism is wholly based on the number and devotion of its disciples; and the effort made in this book to disabuse them can—if it succeeds—contribute largely to saving the peace.

Please turn to back

STALIN'S RUSSIA

by

SUZANNE LABIN

Translated by

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with a Foreword by

ARTHUR KOESTLER

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FOREWORD

By ARTHUR KOESTLER

I

THE BEST WAY OF reading this book is to start with the Preface, then turn to the last chapter, the "discussions with an enlightened Stalinist." The Preface is important because of the clear distinction which it draws between Objectivity and Neutrality: "We are objective in our investigation, but we are not neutral in the face of its results." The last chapter draws the conclusions from the documentary material presented in the book, and returns once more to the theme of the Preface. In an imaginary dialogue, the "enlightened Stalinist" reproaches the author:

"How can you talk of objectivity when your own feelings are visible in every line you write? Your book is not an investigation at all, but an indictment."

"Very well. I claim the right to express my feelings. If it is legitimate, and even noble, to wax indignant when one sees a cripple struck, or an innocent condemned, or a work of art mutilated, then I see no reason why feelings should be silent as soon as the conduct of governments and the fate of peoples are concerned. . . . Those who preach serenity in the judgment of political régimes are incapable of observing drama and humiliation on a collective scale with the same keenness as individual vexations and sufferings. It is more than a right; it is a duty to cultivate a social susceptibility, and to learn to grow indignant at the anonymous martyrdom of a whole people. . . . Do you really desire that humanity should once again suffer the shame and indignity which mortified it when it discovered that for ten long years it had allowed the enemies of Nazism to be tortured whilst remaining deaf to their lamentations?"

Suzanne Labin, a M.Sc. of the University of Paris and graduate of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Internationales, unites the scrupulous objectivity of the research scientist with the pathos and eloquence of a French Jacobin. The Anglo-Saxon virtue of restraint is absent from her writing. It is a passionate book, whose passion is derived, not from bias or belief, but from facts unearthed and assembled with painstaking care, mainly from official Soviet sources: books, statistics, newspapers and radio.

A former comrade of my Communist days asked me recently with an ironic smile what would be done to members of the Communist Party if I had my say. I told him that I would condemn them all to one year of forced reading. The sentence would start with a course in Russian to enable the offender to read Russian newspapers and listen to the Soviet radio. He would have to read *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, one social-economic magazine and one literary magazine, day by day, column by column. Then the collected speeches of the leaders, both living and dead, and the confessions of the dead before they died; then the school books, a selection of average magazine short stories and patriotic poetry. The course would be confined to reading matter authorized by the Soviet Government, and all counter-revolutionary literature would be banned, including, of course, all newspapers, periodicals and books published in the capitalist world. It is my conviction, based on experience at the *locus in quo*, that before the year was over, this enforced exposure of and to Soviet reality would act as a complete cure. Evidence are the few thousand foreign workers—mainly Austrian Schutzbund people and German Communists—who were admitted into Soviet Russia. Unfortunately, their sentence did not come to an end after one year of forced reading of reality; theirs was a more drastic fate.

Suzanne Labin's book would be included in this re-educational curriculum. According to the rules of the game, the author's comments and all quotations from other than official Soviet sources would have to be eliminated. But even in this mutilated form the book would have its effect. The facts of Soviet reality speak for themselves and constitute such an overwhelming indictment of the régime that, once they are known, comments can be dispensed with.

3

The main difficulty about Russia is to get at the facts and to put them before the public. To get at them is difficult because of the double barrier of language and frontiers. To put them before the public is difficult because statements of unpalatable facts are systematically drowned by floods of defamation and slander. The result is that to-day the average Western European knows no more about the realities of everyday life in Soviet Russia than his forbears knew about China in Marco Polo's time.

Ignorance breeds illusions, and illusion, both of the positive and negative kind, is a mortal danger in politics. Soviet sympathizers contend that the existence of forced labour battalions, numbering approximately 10 per cent. of the total Soviet population, is a counter-revolutionary illusion. What better service could be done

to the Soviet case, what more crushing defeat inflicted upon the literary hirelings of the imperialistic war-mongers, than to invite a trade union delegation to tour the Arctic, Siberian and Central Asiatic territories in which the alleged forced labour camps are located? To forestall accusations of bias, the delegation should include Soviet sympathizers of such undoubted sincerity as Professors Haldane, Blackett and Bernal, Mr. Zilliacus and the Dean of Canterbury. If these men were given unrestricted freedom of movement and inquiry to enable them to check their beliefs against reality, I for one would accept their evidence, and so would a considerable section of British public opinion.

Positive illusions are no less dangerous than negative ones. The French and Italian Communists' acceptance of a policy deliberately aimed at wrecking European recovery is only made psychologically possible by their illusions about the structure and aims of the Soviet régime. Moreover, the existence of these strong Communist parties in various European countries, who in case of armed conflict are expected to side with the Red Army, is a potent inducement for the Soviets to continue their policy of expansion, and thereby to increase the risks of a third world war. Without the hope of support by a civil war in Western Europe, it would be suicidal for the Kremlin to challenge American military power; and the hope of civil war rests entirely on the masses of people whose addiction to the Soviet myth is based on their ignorance of reality.

It follows that if Soviet reality could be made accessible on a mass scale, the dangers of war would be considerably reduced. The myth addict, impervious to argument, incredulous of the sincerity of any criticism, can only be cured by a shock-therapy of facts. Wanted is an English Reader's Digest of the Soviet Press, featuring editorials, reports from the capitalist world, home news, literary criticism, events in Soviet science, culture and art; all without comment. Wanted is a monitored survey of Soviet home broadcasts as part of a regular B.B.C. programme on foreign opinion; without comment. Wanted are popular editions in English of Soviet labour legislation; of Soviet electoral law and procedure; of court procedure for dealing with political offences in public and in camera; of censorship regulations; of laws and administrative decrees regulating the Soviet citizen's rights to travel inside his country, to leave his residence; to apply for jobs and to leave jobs—all without comment. Wanted are translations of Soviet first readers, extracts from Soviet textbooks of geography and history. Wanted is a short booklet, exclusively based on translations from the Soviet Press and radio: "England through Russian eyes." Wanted, above all, that our publishers and editors of the Left, who have flooded this country for years with uncritical echoes of Soviet mythology through sixpenny pamphlets, book clubs and magazine columns, should at last

awaken to their responsibilities. They have led the public an intellectual St. Vitus's dance in a pink fog of half-truths; their duty to-day is to help to dispel it before Europe suffocates, physically and morally. To dispel it, not by counter-propaganda and songs of hatred, but by the organized distribution of facts.

The world, tired of isms, its emotions burnt out, is thirsting for cold, clean facts. For we live in an age of anxiety, and the shadows are closing in from all sides. The torch of faith is extinct; our only hope is to fall back on the candles of truth.

FONTAINEBLEAU,

A. K.

December, 1948.

PREFACE

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE Soviet Union claims that under its auspices a social system has been established in fact such as previously existed only in the vain dreams of social reformers. Its opponents declare, on the other hand, that what has come to be called Stalinism deceives the world about its real nature, and that one day the present widespread belief in Soviet Socialism will be considered as one of the most fantastic myths which misled public opinion in the twentieth century. But, one way or the other, for all those who are disturbed at the condition of humanity there can hardly be a more fascinating object of study than the unique experiment which is proceeding in the Soviet Union with 200 millions of people as its raw material, provoking, as it does, debates of such fundamental importance.

And to-day its study becomes more immediately urgent than ever before because that experiment is now being rapidly extended beyond its original limits. In consequence of its brilliant military victories in the late war, the Soviet Union is no longer merely a practical example in a theoretical discussion of social doctrines, but a determining force which affects the life of all peoples and of every individual. The Soviet Union has annexed territories on a large scale; she controls still others; and there is every reason to believe, as the recent example of Czechoslovakia shows, that if she gets the chance she will, with the assistance of the Communist Parties, which are entirely devoted to her cause, overthrow the social structures of many other countries. Now, whilst the peoples of Europe are well acquainted with the advantages and disadvantages of what has come to be called bourgeois democracy, they are not so well, or not at all, acquainted with the real nature of the Soviet régime. And what is much more important, their ignorance on that score is rendered dangerous because they are largely unaware of it.

The present book sets out to remedy as far as possible what has become a dangerous lack of balance in the information available for judging the two systems. Its aim is to reveal the true character of the Soviet régime by giving the reader the completest possible picture of both public and private life in the Soviet Union. We have sought to conduct our investigation according to scientific methods, collecting documentary and other evidence on the widest possible scale and taking it only from such sources as appear to us quite reliable, accompanying them where possible by official Soviet

statements, and providing numerous supporting references. In order that our investigation may largely approximate to present-day Russian reality, we have illustrated it with many current examples.

Although our essential aim has been to establish the facts, it proved impossible, and indeed undesirable, to ignore or attempt to evade the ideological problems urgently implicit in them. In order to facilitate an understanding of the widely varied problems and interpretations raised by the Soviet experiment, we have devoted the final chapter of this book to an imaginary polemic between two Socialists, the one democratic the other authoritarian, who are in complete disagreement concerning the significance of the experiment.

It would seem that some sort of confusion still exists in the minds of many people concerning the terms "objectivity" and "neutrality." Objectivity is a quality used in any method of investigation to establish the truth without regard to consequences and without respect for any preconceived ideas whatever. Neutrality, on the other hand, is an attitude deliberately taken up by an interested party towards the results of an investigation to suit his own convenience. There is no conceivable reason why the truth should always take "the golden mean," as many people seem to think. It may well lie at one extreme or the other. The aim of an "objective" study is to find just where it does lie, irrespective of consequences or prejudices.

An "objective" chemist is the one who, when faced with a disputed point, does not rely on an already formulated theory, but carries out an experiment to discover the truth for himself. The consequent precipitate may be black or white—or even grey. To confuse objectivity and neutrality would be very much like insisting that our experimental chemist should confine himself to producing grey precipitates, and never demonstrating either a black or white result. Now we have conducted our investigation into the nature of Soviet institutions with the most scrupulous objectivity, but we have not been able to avoid the grave criticism which arises out of Russian reality at almost every step. In short, we are objective, but not neutral.

We are objective in our investigation, but we are not neutral in face of its results. However, where we have expressed judgments they have been conditioned only by those criteria of liberty, justice and human well-being which are inseparable from any civilized outlook.

INTRODUCTION

IS IT POSSIBLE TO DISCOVER THE TRUTH?

"You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all of the time." Words attributed to Abraham Lincoln in a speech at Clinton in 1858.

AS EVERYONE KNOWS, all documents relating to Russia are *prima facie* suspect. The Soviet régime, we are told, does not belong to the domain of reason, but to the domain of feelings: its apologists are blind; its critics of bad faith. And as far as those who claim to be objective because they are prepared to see good and evil in equal parts are concerned, the dosage immediately appears suspiciously artificial. The impartial witness is deceived; the tourist generalizes too hastily on what can have been no more than a very fragmentary experience.

Such are the warning objections raised so often against the conducting of an investigation such as ours by people who find it possible to enjoy peace and quiet only in ignorance. For centuries such people declared again and again that it was quite impossible to find out the shape of the earth because such knowledge did not lie within the scope of man's experience. But one day Magellan left the learned doctors standing on the bank and sailed off in two cockle-shells round that same formidable shape.

The Russian problem is certainly not as difficult to solve as all that, and it does not demand investigators of such high qualities. We propose to devote this Introduction to a critical examination of the evidence and of the official information which usually serve as a basis for judgments on the Soviet Union.

Evidence plays the same role in historical research as it does in a court of justice—that is to say, once its truth has been established it permits the judge or investigator to control the statements of the accused, in this case the State. Our evidence will enable us to establish whether political life, material conditions and customs are in conformity with official affirmations, the letter of the law and the proclamations of the Government.

Our evidence comes to us from two very different sources: the stories told by tourists, and the stories of persons who have lived and worked for long periods, often many years, in the Soviet Union.

With a few very rare exceptions, tourists go to the Soviet Union at the invitation of various Soviet organizations or under the ægis of the famous Intourist organization, the official Soviet Travelling Bureau; once they are there, the latter takes complete charge of their movements.

In the tenth century the Bishop of Cremona, a certain Luitprand, was sent by the Pope as Ambassador to Constantinople, then capital of the Byzantine Empire. In his report the good Bishop mentions in particular the close attention paid by the Imperial Police to all his comings and goings, the great alacrity shown in taking him to visit palaces and bazaars, and the magnificence of the receptions given in his honour. But he does not forbear to complain most bitterly of the way in which his liberty of movement was hindered. In this respect, and in very many others, we shall find that the old Byzantine Empire lives again under the sceptre of Stalin.

The Intourist arranges such brilliant receptions for "delegates" to the Soviet Union that it is almost impossible for them not to transfer mentally to the population of the country as a whole at least a little of the pleasure they experience during the few weeks of their stay. This slightly intoxicating effect is clearly visible in the reports of many of the numerous delegations which travelled through the Soviet Union before the war. Paul Dhermy, a delegate of the workers of Saint-Denis and of the Hotchkiss Works, was received as follows:

"A detachment of the Red Army received us playing the 'Internationale,' which we sang in chorus. . . . We were then taken to the Intourist restaurant, where tables richly loaded with food awaited us" (*Révolution Proletarienne*, December 25th, 1933).

Each delegation is met by a comparable reception committee: workers are met by workers; intellectuals are met by the organization, V.O.K.S. (Society for Soviet Cultural Relations with Other Countries).

Paul Pompilio, a delegate from a Stalinist organization of French musicians, reports:

"The train in which the delegation travelled was provided with all the comforts of a diplomatic coach. . . . Several interpreters, both male and female, accompanied us. These interpreters, who never left us throughout the whole of our long journey . . . were charming to us beyond words" (Pompilio, p. 6).

Writing in the March quarter (1934) of the *Bulletin of the Graduates' Association of the Chemical Institute of Nancy*, a French chemist reports as follows on his visit to the Soviet Union:

"The V.O.K.S. organization issues the authorization necessary to

visit certain institutions; for instance, a model factory, a model club, a model crèche, a model prison, and so on. Visitors live in special hotels reserved for foreigners; they take their meals in special restaurants; and if they buy anything whilst they are there they do so in special shops reserved for foreigners. . . . The greater part of the information they desire is provided by official guides, who play the fourfold role of guides, interpreters, propagandists and spies."

Yvon Delbos also complains that he was greatly hampered by the control the Intourist exercised on the movements of all visitors:

"Without doubt we came up against prohibitions and wanted to do impossible things. We found ourselves unable to visit a barracks, a hospital or a home for the aged—or a prison with political prisoners."

The war did nothing to modify the age-old methods once employed to deceive the worthy Bishop Luitprand. Harold Laski, at that time Chairman of the British Labour Party, M. Gogenola, Uruguayan Attaché to Moscow, and Paul Parpais, a French Left-wing Socialist, who all carried out careful investigations in the Soviet Union during the years 1944, 1945 and 1946, unanimously report that the Soviet authorities continued to place the same obstacles in the way of all inquiries, and to proffer the same distorting mirrors.

Is it possible to travel in the Soviet Union without accepting the services of the Intourist? Theoretically it is, but in practice any traveller who attempted to do so would immediately be faced with the following insuperable difficulties:

First of all such a traveller would find his expenses rising into astronomical regions. Up to 1936 the British traveller was asked to pay 2s. 2d. for a rouble. Since then the price of the rouble has dropped to about 8½d. Now before the war the purchasing power of the rouble was approximately 2d. This would mean that a traveller living at his own expense in the Soviet Union would have to pay about thirteen times as much as at home up to 1936 and about five times as much after that. In 1947 the official estimated rate of exchange of the rouble was 20 roubles to the pound sterling, whilst the actual purchasing power of the rouble was rather less than 2½d. In other words, a British tourist in the Soviet Union would have to pay rather less than five times as much for everything as he would at home.

This preliminary enormous difficulty for any traveller wishing to make himself independent of the Intourist has been stressed by Professor Louis Rougier of the University of Besançon, who went to the Soviet Union on an official mission. He also questions whether an independent traveller would be able to find a room in any of the few hotels reserved for foreigners in the Soviet Union.

All such hotels are, of course, the property of the State, and a hint from the Tcheka, O.G.P.U., N.K.W.D.—or M.V.D. at the time of writing—would be quite sufficient to make them “full up” at any convenient moment. What chances has our tourist of lodging privately with ordinary Russians? Being *a priori* suspect, an independent tourist would hopelessly compromise his host, thus rendering a very poor return for the hypothetical hospitality. And, again, a foreign tourist would find it quite impossible to accommodate himself to the promiscuity imposed on the ordinary Russian citizen by the housing crisis, which is particularly severe in the Soviet Union.

And as for attempting to travel through the Soviet Union without the aid of the Intourist, that would be the thirteenth labour of Hercules. He would first have to obtain permission, then he would have to provide himself with the special Soviet passport for travelling in the interior, and then he would have “. . . to queue up for days at a time before the booking-office windows at railway stations imploring the clerks on the other side to sell him a railway ticket.” He would be “unable to visit any factory or any public institution whatsoever because they are all strictly guarded by military personnel and may not be entered without a special permit. But if he entered the charmed circle of the Intourist he would be shown only the best by way of sample: a model school, a model prison, a model sanatorium, a model House of Culture, and so on” (Rougier, p. 25).

Since the war the tribulations awaiting any such would-be independent tourist have even increased in rigour. A decree published on June 1st, 1946, orders that “the sale of tickets at railway stations shall take place solely in the actual queue order, and it is strictly forbidden for booking-clerks to issue tickets to porters, agents or any other intermediary.”

The *Pravda* of June 3rd, 1946, indulging in a little “self-criticism” because the Minister of Transport was on the point of being disgraced and dismissed from office, commented as follows on this new edict:

“Formerly the traveller having obtained a numbered chit for his place in the queue had a certain guarantee that at the end of it all he would receive his railway ticket, and he could then take a walk in the streets or perhaps return the next day to fetch his ticket, but now he is to be compelled to stand in a line before the booking-offices for days at a time.”

Potemkin Villages

We know that when the Empress Catherine II expressed her intention of travelling through her realms in order to see for

herself how her subjects lived under her rule, her Prime Minister and favourite Prince Potemkin conceived the ingenious idea of taking her to see villages erected for the purpose and peopled by supers. Such a thing is possible, of course, only in an autocracy able to do just what it pleases with a mass of people deprived of all rights. The old procedure has been revived and perfected under the Government of Stalin.

Andrew Smith, an American workman and former member of the American Communist Party, who became head of a department in a Soviet factory which was often chosen to be visited by foreign delegations, writes:

"One day . . . an announcement was made at a department meeting that a delegation was coming on the following day, that we would have to stay on a *subotnik* (voluntary labour) in order to clear up and prepare the factory for the visitors. . . . Often times, in their anxiety, the propagandists would instruct the workers to clean out some necessary machine parts, which would be needed on the following day. . . . Sometimes it took us many days to find parts that had been thus removed" (Smith, p. 70).

Needless to say, this sort of thing, which was of frequent occurrence, greatly hampered production.

On the day of such a visit a "special meal" would be provided for the workers. Napkins, knives and forks would suddenly appear "as though by a miracle." This statement is less astonishing when we know the extreme shortage of household and domestic goods of even the simplest nature in the Soviet Union. Andrew Smith also declares that the answers of the workers to questions put to them by the visiting delegates were often deliberately garbled by the official interpreters. For instance, when a worker answered correctly that the cost of his meal was 2.30 roubles, the interpreter would say that it was 30 kopecks. And wages of 75 roubles a month would be passed on as 275 roubles. According to the same author, the "workers meetings" held in honour of such delegates were packed with professional propagandists. There is nothing improbable about such evidence when one compares the flowery discourses delivered by such "proletarians" with the admittedly very low cultural level of the masses of the people in the Soviet Union, and when one hears descriptions in glowing terms of splendid standards of living allegedly enjoyed in the Soviet Union when we know full well from official admissions that at the time (1933-4) the country was suffering from a severe famine.

Ghislain Schaefs, formerly a member of the Central Committee of the Belgian Communist Party and honorary member of the 71st Regiment of the Don, who was cured of his illusions after a stay in the Soviet Union, tells us that when the Turkish Minister Tewfik Bey was due to arrive at Sebastopol the authorities ordered

a general cleaning up of the town. Vagabonds were rounded up and put safely out of sight, and the inhabitants were forbidden to leave their houses. From the same period Professor Louis Rougier reports the statement of a Kharkov intellectual that all the stations through which the train carrying another Turkish Minister, the President of the Council, Ismet Pasha, passed were first cleared of the waiting crowds.

"A great buffet was set up in the station at Kharkov, and all the prices were one-tenth of those current in the State shops at the time. The day after that I witnessed a similar bluff at Dniepers-troi, where the dam was to be officially inaugurated a week later. Belgian and Dutch foremen showed me co-operatives packed with food for the use of journalists and officials. At such shops a dozen eggs, whose current price was a rouble, had been marked down to 1 kopeck each" (Rougier, p. 28).

This disturbing conformity of two independent witnesses is reinforced by the following circumstances. They indicate incidentally that not even the most cultured and intelligent are safe from deception by Soviet methods. In 1933 the French President, M. Edouard Herriot, went to the Soviet Union and returned to write his celebrated book, *Orient*. On p. 164 of this book, M. Herriot writes of Kiev:

"An immense railway station built of concrete with axial lighting; mounted police on the streets. It is certainly the equivalent of a modern capital" (Herriot).

Well and good, but at the same time, in September, 1933, another foreigner was in Kiev, a Mr. Harry Lang, a member of the American Federation of Labour and correspondent of the New York *Vorwaerts*, an American daily newspaper printed in German. Here is what he has to say:

"The official French Mission arrived whilst we were in Kiev. In consequence, we became the involuntary witnesses of a theatrical production *à la* Potemkin. . . . The day before, at two o'clock in the morning, the whole population was turned out to clean the streets and house fronts and repair the pavements. Tens of thousands of hands were mobilized to give a dirty and dilapidated town a European appearance. All the shops and all the co-operatives were closed. Strict instructions were issued that on no account were queues to be formed on the streets. The *bezprizorny* (vagrant children) and all the other vagabonds of the town were rounded up and driven off. Militiamen [policemen] on horseback paraded in the squares, a sight absolutely unique for the inhabitants."

During the war, of course, the "tourist" category completely disappeared, and the only strangers who were still able to move about in the country and give information to the outside world were a few correspondents representing the big newspapers, chiefly

American. Their reports show that the obstacles which already made it so difficult for tourists to obtain reliable information were greatly aggravated during the war. The thousand and one ingenious measures which permitted an all-powerful police system to distort the real picture of Soviet society for the benefit of visitors were now reinforced by the sacred and simple pretext, "reasons of military security." The visitor is not only deceived by the artifices of the Soviet Government, but in addition he often deceives himself.

It should never be forgotten that from the outset the standpoint of the tourist is falsified in principle. He starts off with a determination to see something remarkable, and, of course, he is not disappointed. He forgets that similar "remarkable" things exist in his own country and that he lives side by side with them every day without troubling to pay them any special attention. If the Prefect of Police in Paris organized a sort of French Intourist to show foreign visitors our modern workshops and factories, our ultra-modern hospitals, and our modern schools—and nothing else, why then France would soon be seen to have eclipsed the Soviet Union in the role of earthly paradise.

True enough, but does that mean that the evidence of tourists and of Press correspondents can be of no assistance to us in our efforts to establish the truth about the Soviet Union? Not at all. In fact, a critical study of the evidence they offer us has already revealed one very important fact—namely, the existence of a deliberate campaign of propaganda on the part of the Soviet Government. From that it is logical to take the next step and assume that because such propaganda insistently presents us with a distorted picture of the Soviet Union the real thing must be rather less presentable. There is the first accurate and indisputable brush stroke to our picture.

Further, certain details gleaned from the notes of observant visitors can be of great service to us. In the first place, there is the question of the prices marked in the shop windows. Sometimes these prices are seen to be identical in the evidence of more than one witness, in the evidence of a friend and in the evidence of an enemy. Taken together with the officially decreed or listed prices they furnish us with a very reliable basis for judging the standard of life of the people of the Soviet Union. Similar observations of visitors concerning material details, confirmed by other sources, are valid as evidence in respect of various phases of Soviet life—for instance, the housing crisis, the totalitarian character of Soviet propaganda, the strict military surveillance of factories, etc. Thus although the evidence of tourists cannot be considered as what historians call a primary source, it is nevertheless far from useless or negligible.

The Disillusioned

A much more important source of evidence than that of tourists is represented by the testimony of those people who have lived and worked in the Soviet Union side by side with ordinary Russians for long periods.

From the very fact that these people went to the Soviet Union to settle down there we may assume that they were sympathetically disposed towards the Soviet régime and prepared to judge defects with an indulgent eye. The most striking case of this sort is that of Andrew Smith, whose book describing his experiences we have already quoted. He had been a miner in the United States and a member of the Communist Party there for sixteen years. During a visit to the Soviet Union as a member of a delegation, he was so moved with enthusiasm for what he saw (read: what he was shown) that he decided "to leave the United States and make my home in the one country where I was confident my wife and I would enjoy a happy life" (Smith, p. 24).

He gave all his savings, with the exception of 3,000 dollars, which he reserved for the purchase of a machine "to help build up Socialism," to American and Czech organizations. "What do I need savings for in a country where my future will be secure?" he asked himself, "A country in which children and old people are the object of particular care on the part of the State." Then he went to the Soviet Union and worked there for three years. The book which he wrote on his return is one implacable accusation, one long cry of indignation, one long warning to others against the lies and deceit of which he had been a victim.

A. Rudolf was another one who was so convinced by a similar official visit to the Soviet Union that he decided to go and live there, but before doing so he wrote a pro-Soviet book entitled *Fifteen Delegates in the Soviet Union* (*Quinze délégués en U.R.S.S.*). He, too, stayed in the Soviet Union for three years and on his return in 1935 he wrote another book entitled *Why I left the Soviet Union* (*Pourquoi j'ai quitté l'U.R.S.S.*). It opens as follows:

"It was only much later than I discovered that at first I had seen only the surface of things, and that it is impossible for anyone, no matter who he may be, to judge the situation in the Soviet Union accurately after only a few months' stay, after a visit made as a delegate, carefully guided towards what he is desired to see and equally carefully headed off from everything he is not intended to see. It was only little by little that I discovered that I had been shown only model institutions and that all the difficulties and the enormous defects had been hidden from me" (Rudolf, p. 6).

At first almost all these disillusioned friends of the Soviet Union keep silent concerning their depressing experiences. The cause of

the Soviet Union was very near to their hearts, and they were generally unwilling that any revelations of theirs might serve the enemies of Socialism. Only after cruel doubts and long hesitations did they finally decide to speak in the name of an ideal not abandoned by them but betrayed in the Soviet Union.

A French engineer, J. Berger, who spent a long time in the Soviet Union attached to an institute for technical research, writes:

"After a long inner struggle I have arrived at the sad conclusion that it is quite impossible to discover the least resemblance between the Stalinist régime and Socialism" (*Revolution prolétarién*, September 25th, 1935).

Francisque Bornet lived in the Soviet Union for fifteen years before making the acquaintance of the Soviet concentration camps in Siberia, and then it was because the war and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 automatically turned all French citizens residing in the Soviet Union into "foreign suspects." Freed in 1946 only after the French Embassy in Moscow had moved heaven and earth on his behalf, he was enabled to return to France, where the following year he published a short, modest and poignant account of his twenty years in the Soviet Union, which he summed up as twenty years of deception and bitterness.

Those who have experienced this tragedy of disillusion followed by a dilemma of conscience are already very numerous, to mention only, apart from those we have already cited, Ciliga, Miliero, Victor Serge and Goyenola. In addition, various people who have returned after spending a considerable time in the Soviet Union have made confidential statements concerning their experiences. One and all, their tenor is identical.

The supporters of Stalin declare that all these witnesses have returned soured and embittered men because the Soviet Union did not sufficiently fulfil their ambitions and serve their personal interest. Various cogent objections can be raised against such an explanation.

For one thing, nothing is better calculated to serve the material interests of an author than to publish a book in favour of the Soviet Union: he is assured at once of great publicity abroad, journeys to the Soviet Union in luxury, astronomical sales figures there, proportional royalties, etc. André Gide is one of those authors who has been accused of making money by writing an anti-Soviet book, his *Retour d'U.R.S.S.*, which sold 300,000 copies; he replied to the charge most pertinently by pointing out that had he written a *Return Enchanted*, the book would have been translated and printed in vast numbers in the Soviet Union and by every section of the Communist International. In addition, quite a number of witnesses who have been abused in this way by the

supporters of Stalin have returned to Europe only after surmounting extreme dangers—for instance, Miliero. He deserted from the French Army in 1925 to go to the Soviet Union. Nine years later he preferred to return to France and pay the penalty for his offence. A similar case is that of A., a witness who has given evidence in private and does not wish his name to be known because his wife is still in Russia. In order to escape from the Soviet Union, he invoked the aid of the Italian Consulate, although the Consul reminded him that he was under sentence of death in Italy for Communist activity. And then, of course, there were hundreds of members of the Austrian *Schutzbund* in a similar plight. They sought refuge in the Soviet Union after the armed suppression of the Social Democratic workers in Austria in February, 1934. Four years later they besieged the Austrian Embassy in Moscow asking to be assisted to return to Austria (which had in the meantime been annexed by Hitler Germany) and quite prepared to risk being incarcerated in National-Socialist concentration camps rather than suffer the terror of the Soviet Secret Police any longer. The same thing happened with German Communists who had fled to the Soviet Union after Hitler came to power in Germany. In consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, they were given the chance of returning to their own country and risking their reception at the hands of their old enemies. All of them who were still at liberty took advantage of the possibility and returned to Germany. They preferred Nazi concentration camps to life in the Soviet Union.

There are also many cases of Soviet officials holding responsible positions abroad who refused to return to the Soviet Union, preferring to unburden their consciences at grave risk to life and limb. In 1937, Barmine, a member of the Communist Party for nineteen years and Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Athens, decided to break with his government and tell the world what he knew. A similar incident had occurred some years earlier at the Soviet Embassy in Paris when the Soviet Councillor Bessedovsky resigned his position and published revelations which seemed unbelievable at the time. Fritz Wollenberg, a well-known Munich revolutionary who had fled to the Soviet Union after the crushing of the Munich Soviet Republic in 1919, taken service in the Red Army and risen to the rank of Colonel, succeeded in making an adventurous escape from the Soviet Union, and was compelled to live in hiding in North Africa for years to escape the consequences. Krivitzky, a high official of the Soviet Secret Police abroad, fled from his post under highly adventurous circumstances and then published a book of crushing revelations. Victor A. Kravchenko, a highly-placed Soviet engineer sent to Washington to purchase arms in 1944, refused to return to the Soviet Union and published a sensational book at the end of 1945 telling what he knew.

The evidence of such men can hardly be dismissed on the grounds that they were guided by material interests, for one and all of them knew that thenceforth they would be exposed to the vengeance of the Soviet Secret Police and never again know a moment's peace. They were certainly not safe abroad, and they knew it. Scores of such men and women have been assassinated outside the Soviet frontiers. Reiss was murdered in Lausanne, Kurt Landau and Andreas Nin in Barcelona, Trotsky in Mexico, Blasco in France, and in 1940 Krivitzky was found dead, stabbed, in a hotel room in Washington, to mention only a few of the more sensational cases. Victor Kravchenko is still alive at the moment of writing, but he has to be guarded day and night by American detectives.

The evidence of one individual witness in such matters might well be rejected for the hundred and one pertinent reasons which might justify a suspicion of his good faith, or because his evidence is limited in time and space, because he can have known only a comparatively few places, heard only an infinitesimally small proportion of the populace, been present at no more than a fleeting instant of their lives—in short, because his experience is necessarily fragmentary and because he will have interpreted it with his own necessarily limited competence.

However, the author of a more general study is in a position to escape the inevitable limitations and deceptive impressions of the isolated individual witness. He can supplement the evidence of one witness by that of another; he can confront their evidence and compare it with evidence from other sources, and in this way he has every opportunity of isolating the objective facts.

Official Texts

The essential documents which have been marshalled as the basis of this book consist of official statements, often translated by official Communist sources; the laws of the Soviet Union; official decrees; speeches—in particular, the speeches of Stalin himself; reports and resolutions of official congresses; articles in the Communist Press; typewritten documents handed to certain visitors of note by the Soviet authorities and subsequently placed at our disposal; and, finally, official material of the International Labour Office, which has published nothing whatever concerning the Soviet Union without the permission of the Soviet Government since the latter joined the League of Nations.

Where authoritarian régimes are concerned, legislative texts and all official documents—even when they exist in vast quantities, as is the case in the Soviet Union—are not decisive compared with the political intention behind them. In other words, the difference

between the appearance created in such texts and existing reality can be infinite.

However, one assumption in this respect must be permitted to the historian. Whilst he cannot be reproached with excessive scepticism if he refuses to accept the validity of such texts as grant rights and privileges to those within their jurisdiction before having compared them with existing reality, he can also not be reproached with bad faith if he admits without further proof the validity of all such texts as introduce some form of coercion or exploitation. It is a notorious fact that texts of the first-named order are often nothing but demagogic artifices, and this applies in particular to political constitutions. Texts of the second-named order, on the other hand, inevitably reflect compelling social necessities, and no government would ever give them legal documentation without being obliged to, and this applies in particular to the laws of the land. Historians have therefore always treated texts of the latter order as the essential material of their investigations. And, indeed, have they not shown us the essential facts about ancient Babylon from the code of Hammurabi, about the ancient Jews from the sacerdotal codes, about the Byzantine Empire from the codes of Theodosius and Justinian?

It is astonishing that up to the present so little use has been made of such valuable documents in the investigation of conditions in the Soviet Union, particularly as they lend irrefutable support to evidence of its nature more exposed to doubt as malevolent denigration. For instance, when the Soviet Government issued a decree imposing the death sentence for theft and even extending its operation to minors, the unavoidable deduction for the historical investigator was that banditry was seriously on the increase in the Soviet Union; and a further equally unavoidable deduction from this was that the state of the country must be miserable in the extreme. Such texts serve to confirm conclusions arrived at from investigations on the economic field concerning the startling fall in mass standards of living in the Soviet Union during the "Five-Year Plan" period.

When Statistics "run on Socialist Rails"

It is a very common custom, and a particularly useful one for modern anti-rationalism, to attempt to make capital out of the difficulties, sometimes very considerable, of correctly applying scientific principles and methods, and to bring the principles and methods themselves into discredit, particularly when their results threaten to overthrow more than one established dogma and to reveal the emptiness of many a beloved "axiom." It is therefore not surprising that constant attempts have been made, and are still being made, to prove the fundamental impossibility of correctly

interpreting social phenomena. However, the use of statistics is as necessary to sociological reasoning as the use of the balance is to analytical chemistry. Although the science of statistics is still young and still suffers from many imperfections, it nevertheless dominates the financial and industrial life of all civilized states.

Unfortunately, the Soviet régime affords most valuable assistance to the enemies of statistics, and it has discredited statistics more determinedly than their most hostile critics have ever been able to do.

Marxism, urged on like all other young and revolutionary theories by the desire to overthrow paradoxically all previously conceived notions, has declared that there is no such thing as objective truth, but only "class truth." Western European Marxists have done their best, often with extremely subtle reasoning, to water down a proposition so contrary to the spirit of progress and to the progress of the human spirit. The Bolsheviks, more elementary and more arrogant, have adopted the proposition without disguise. Only "petty bourgeois" could possibly consider statistics as an instrument of measurement; "real revolutionaries" must use them as an instrument of propaganda. The Soviet Government is, of course, not alone amongst governments in tampering with statistics, but such tampering is universally condemned by public opinion outside the Soviet Union and, naturally, by all serious economists. In the Soviet Union the falsification of statistics has been raised almost to the level of a political duty. As the *Izvestia* declared in its issue of November 27th, 1929: "Let us put statistics on Socialist rails in order that they shall not become detached from the class struggle."

Up to 1930 the Soviet State-Planning Commission (Gosplan) published economic reports which were more or less reliable, but in that year the Gosplan administration was "purged" and docile creatures were appointed. The Soviet Statistical Office was placed under the control of the purged administration and the result can be studied in the *Bolshevist*, No. 8, 1937:

"The President of the Council of People's Commissars stresses that production figures have been fallaciously increased on paper and that the Government has been systematically deceived by reports of non-existing successes."

In August, 1946, at the time of a new purge, the *Izvestia* repeatedly denounced the systematic falsification of production figures by factory directors anxious to earn production premiums. The truth is, as we can see, that not even the supreme authorities of the Soviet Union know the true value of the statistics placed before them. Soviet statistics rise and fall and rise and fall again as they go up and down the bureaucratic ladder according to the wishes and requirements of those concerned, but rarely according to reality.

The only realities are wages and salaries, prices, and the quality and quantity of goods available. We have therefore devoted our chapter on economic questions to sociological matters (the standard of living of the working masses) rather than to economic questions in general (figures of production, and so on).

Despite all we have said above, it is nevertheless consoling to find that even statistical material as distorted as that issued by the Soviet authorities can be subjected to the criterion of scientific investigation. Persistence, acumen and patience have permitted determined investigators to obtain certain valid results from the mass of statistics issued by the Soviet authorities. To our knowledge, the two most remarkable examples are those of Professor Prokopovitch, who edited an economic bulletin in Prague before the war, since published in Geneva, and Yourievsky, who works in Paris. Using partial figures against total figures, the documents necessary for domestic economic life against those issued merely for propaganda abroad, the admissions of to-day against the claims of yesterday, likely calculations based on distribution against the uncontrollable figures issued as the basis for claims of successes, extrapolating figures prudently suppressed, interpolating figures deliberately dispersed, and carefully controlling the least differences over a period of fifteen years, these two economists, working separately, have arrived independently at concurring results. Investigations of this kind have been of great assistance to us in the passages of this book devoted to Soviet economic problems.

"Self-Criticism"

The biggest source of documentary evidence of a reliable nature concerning the Soviet régime is the practice of so-called "self-criticism," which takes up so much space in the Soviet Press.

It should occasion no surprise that we place documentary evidence culled from the Soviet Press in the category of "official texts." The Soviet Government quite openly admits—is even proud of the fact—that all printed matter must first pass a censorship in which there are no loopholes. It is worth while examining the attempt of the Soviet authorities to present this self-criticism as an evidence of the existence of democracy in the Soviet Union, for examination of the evidence destroys the pretension at once.

Never, never is this self-criticism directed against Soviet leaders still in honour and office, against the doctrines of the Communist Party, or against the so-called General Line of the moment. On the contrary, it is always in the name of the Soviet leaders, in the name of party doctrines, and in the interests of the General Line for the time being that "self-criticism" uncovers the vices of the day before and denounces the errors of leaders and officials already

disgraced. Always and everywhere this "self-criticism" is directed against executive organs of a subordinate character, which are roundly denounced as being unworthy of the superior organs of a directing character.

This fundamental characteristic of Soviet "self-criticism" reveals a practice typical of all modern dictatorship: satisfy the urge for action of the lower orders by giving them problems of application; at the same time train them to absolute obedience, whilst surrounding general principles and superior authorities with a taboo against all criticism. Give little men little things to keep them occupied, whilst reserving big things for big men. Diffuse discussion deliberately over a wide field of consequences rather than concentrate it on a comparatively small number of causes. Imbue the "militants" with arrogance towards their inferiors and servility towards their superiors. Raise up some, and cast down others. And by a degree of criticism inversely proportioned to the rank of the criticized, conclude from the permanent inadequacy of the lower orders the unqualified excellence of the despot.

It is important to note that "self-criticism" is just as much synchronized as self-praise. In perfect unison, without a dissentient voice, the Soviet Press raises the same man or the same achievement to the identical pinnacle of super-excellence—and with the same unanimity it puts the one or the other in the pillory. Never, never is there a dissentient voice; never one party to attack and another to defend. To an unprejudiced observer, this in itself is quite sufficient evidence that the whole practice is deliberately organized and controlled by the Soviet leaders themselves.

"Self-criticism" serves to fashion the citizen of the Soviet Union to the desired pattern, and at the same time it is a valuable utensil of the current political kitchen. It serves as a diversion or counter-irritant; it is a safety valve for the discontent of the masses. By the sacrifice of one or two minor executive officials, the masses of the people are persuaded that their sufferings and difficulties are present in the minds of those above them, and that the latter virtuously share their indignation at all-too-obvious defects.

We shall have occasion to return to this important aspect of Soviet life in connection with the fabulous monster called "sabotage." In this introduction, devoted to an examination of the general reliability of the documents put forward in evidence, it is sufficient to point out that a safety valve, or diversion, is always a revelation of the discontent it is designed to dissipate. This revelatory role is enhanced by another function of Soviet "self-criticism": to crush the men who are marked down for despatch. It is elementary cunning to impute to those to be disgraced not only the responsibility for imaginary offences, but the responsibility for certain real abuses which form the subject of public complaint.

In other words, "self-criticism" kills a number of birds with one stone: it serves to make the masses still more fanatical; it serves as a safety valve for their discontent; and it is an instrument of revenge. In short, it is one of the choicer blooms of Bolshevist statecraft.

It is a secondary matter for the purpose of our investigation that the charges are usually sent to the wrong address; what makes them so valuable for our purpose is that they do, in fact, refer to existing abuses. For example, when foreign mining engineers are accused of having deliberately caused fire-damp explosions in Soviet mines in order "to overthrow the Government," we may be excused for doubting their guilt, but we shall certainly believe in the reality of the disasters themselves. And again, when the Soviet Press makes a tremendous noise denouncing this that and the other person as being responsible for the shortage of milk, spoons, petrol, or whatever the commodity may be, we may be forgiven for not accepting the campaign as evidence of the ideal functioning of democracy in the Soviet Union whilst regarding it as conclusive evidence of the fact that the Soviet Union really is short of the commodities mentioned. On October 25th, 1938, the *Pravda* accused "the enemies of the people" of having:

"Disorganized the work of the public restaurants and provoked animosity amongst the workers towards the Soviet Power. In an effort to do as much damage as possible they have diminished the number of such restaurants serving the public, lowered the quality of the meals provided, and caused queues to form everywhere. Executing the orders of those who sent them, the Trotskyite agents of Fascism have sprinkled nails and glass in the food and deliberately poisoned the workers with spoiled food."

We may well remain sceptical of the perfidy imputed to the "Trotskyite agents of Fascism," but there is no doubt from what the *Pravda* says that the food served in workers' restaurants in the Soviet Union is abominable.

But, seeing that the admissions of the Soviet Press in this and other matters are the result of a deliberate decision of the higher Soviet authorities to publish them, are conclusions based on them of any real value? Yes, we still think they are, and the enormity of some of the facts revealed in this fashion—the reader will find some truly astonishing examples in the course of this book—gives them an indisputable demonstrative value which we shall discuss later. Further, the objective outside historian is not subject to the trials and tribulations of the Soviet citizen. He compiles, compares and classifies the admissions—a work of patience which the Soviet Government would never dare to allow any of its own subjects to perform—and from the whole he is able to distil certain conclusions of general validity.

The reader may be surprised to find that the Soviet Press,

closely censored and controlled as it is, contains material capable of being used against the Soviet régime. The truth is that this represents a real chink in its totalitarian armour. The Soviet Government is on the horns of a very real dilemma: either it must risk denouncing itself and its works for the benefit of observant foreign critics, or it must surrender its attempts to impound the flood of popular discontent at home. Clearly, it prefers to look after its own domestic safety first. Further, it calculates that outside its own frontiers its Press will be examined only by comparatively small circles of interested people, whose revelations can be countered by a tremendous propaganda display—the reader will need no reminding that in this respect the Soviet Government is extremely efficient. The maintenance of its power depends more on the passivity of its subjects than on international public opinion. Further, in the eyes of the world, mass discontent which developed to the point of an explosion would be much more serious evidence of difficulties and abuses in the Soviet Union than even the most striking admissions of its own Press.

Were it not for this dilemma and the way in which the Soviet Government is compelled to resolve it, the task of the investigator into Soviet reality would be very much more difficult. Thanks to it, the truth can be established about the Soviet régime with no greater margin of error than is usual in any social analysis. Thus, for all its value to the Soviet régime, the practice of "self-criticism" has one big disadvantage: it permits the scientific observer to penetrate behind the veil.

There is no Russian enigma.

THE CONSTITUTION

"In all important questions, we, the Council of People's Commissars, seek counsel and instructions from the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, and, in particular, from Comrade Stalin. . . . In both principle and form this is in accordance with our great Constitution." Speech delivered by Molotov on January 19th, 1938, to the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union and reported in the *Pravda* on January 20th, 1938.

Laws without Legality

AT ALL PERIODS OF its long history Russia has been a country of innumerable laws and little legality. In the ancient Byzantine Empire we can also find—as one finds so many other characteristic traits of Russian society—this curious contrast between a veritable arsenal of written law and a common practice which annuls them all. In the one as in the other, the whim of an absolute despot is the supreme law. The Soviet Constitution, promulgated in November, 1936, and called "Stalinist," represents no breach with this time-honoured tradition. It consists of hundreds of articles, innumerable paragraphs, and exhaustive details—and yet it has not produced the slightest change of any real importance in the political situation. Nevertheless, we propose to devote a few pages to its study in order to familiarize our readers with official Soviet terminology.

Administrative Sub-divisions

The Soviet Union, or, to give it its full title, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, is a federation of republics called Socialist Soviet Federative Republics. After the widespread annexations made possible by the successful issue of the late war, their number increased from eleven to sixteen. In order to find his way about in the maze represented by the administrative structure of the Soviet Union the reader must remember that in theory the Constitution grants specific administrations to each of the 180 nationalities living within its jurisdiction. It thus creates an interwoven pattern of sub-divisions on a nationality basis and sub-divisions on a territorial basis.

The sub-divisions on a nationality basis consist of enclaves, so

to speak, embracing a particular nationality group within the federal republics. These enclaves are of four kinds and they are entitled, according to their dignity in the administrative hierarchy, autonomous republics, autonomous provinces, autonomous territories and autonomous regions. These four categories of subdivisions on a nationality basis are independent of each other. The territory of a federal republic does not necessarily consist entirely of such enclaves; in fact, it need not include any at all if its entire population happens to consist of one uniform nationality. The four categories of nationality enclaves enjoy different rights and privileges according to their position. Only federal republics have the right, purely nominal, of separating from the Union. Only one federal republic has ever made the attempt, and that was Georgia—and it ended very badly. In February, 1921, the Georgian Soviet Republic was “re-federated” with blood and iron.

The autonomous republics of the Crimea, of the Kalmucks, the Balkarias, and the Chetcheno-Ingonchias, and the autonomous territory of the Karatchas (Turco-Tartars) were dissolved either during or after the war to punish them for separatist tendencies which became visible during the German occupation. The Ukrainian Republic, the second federal republic of the Union, was made to suffer a positive tempest of Russification and Mongolization for its separatist sins. These measures, inspired by the pure spirit of Czarist centralism, were accompanied and reinforced by the deportation of whole groups of inhabitants. As a result of German barbarism and Russian chauvinism—and particularly the latter—the Ukraine has suffered a decline of its indigenous population figures from forty to fifteen million souls. Twenty-five per cent. of the former population of the Crimea consisted of Tartars, but the Soviet authorities have since deported them all. Similarly, the Kalmucks have been dispersed to the four winds. Without particularly stressing the repressive aspect of these operations, we must point out how blatantly they expose the pretended free federalism of the Soviet Republics proclaimed so solemnly in the 1936 Constitution and underlined in innumerable propaganda publications.

Apart from these sub-divisions on a nationality basis, there are also territorial sub-divisions known in the Soviet Union as *rayons* or districts, urban areas and rural localities. Unlike the subdivisions on a nationality basis, these territorial sub-divisions completely cover the whole of the Soviet Union with their network, in which each larger territory includes the smaller.

The Legislative Power

The central legislative power (according to the letter of the Stalinist Constitution) reposes in two “chambers,” called the Union Council and the Council of Nationalities. Nominally, the

former is a sort of parliament, whilst the latter is supposed to ensure representation in its highest councils to all the various nationalities which inhabit the Soviet Union, but not in proportion to their population. The union of these two chambers is called the Supreme Council.

The Union Council is elected by direct universal suffrage embracing all Soviet citizens of both sexes who have reached the age of eighteen, irrespective of their occupation. In order to limit the number of members of the Council to 600, only one member is elected by every 300,000 inhabitants.

The conditions under which this direct universal suffrage operates make it one of the most absurd caricatures in the political history of mankind, although, God knows, it is not short of open and covert violations of the system of popular representation. One fundamental fact renders its nominal provisions devoid of all sense and of all vestige of democratic practice—namely, Article 126 of the Soviet Constitution, which permits the existence of only one political party, and the choice has fallen—what a curious coincidence!—on the Communist Party. Speaking at the Eighth Congress of the Soviets on November 25th, 1936, Stalin declared:

"There is no question of any freedom for political parties in the Soviet Union apart from the Communist Party. We Bolsheviks consider this provision one of the merits of the constitutional project. . . . There is no basis in the Soviet Union for any other party than the Communist Party" (*Pravda*, November 26th, 1936).

What sort of an electoral campaign can there be when only one party is allowed to conduct it? The thing is mere buffoonery, particularly as the Stalinist Constitution permits only one candidate per constituency. And, further, the electoral law provides that all ballot papers mentioning any other name than the one already printed on it shall be counted as votes in favour of that one official candidate. The only invalid votes are when blank papers are given up by electors. In addition, as each citizen votes, the fact is officially entered in the interior passport each citizen must carry. Who would dare under such circumstances to absent himself from the poll?

Bad conscience is an insatiable Moloch, and it troubles the Soviet authorities to the extent of causing them to stage a further comedy with the idea of making the first one appear a little less absurd. The single candidate in a constituency is not chosen by the Communist Party alone. Oh dear no! And the official electoral body which puts forward the candidate is called the "Block of Communists and Non-Party Representatives." As though "Non-party Representatives," who by their very name are seen to lack any organization to represent, could form a "Block" with a highly-organized and highly-active group like the Communist Party! However, these "Non-party Representatives," enthusiastic and

"objective" supporters of the Communist Party (witness once again the bad conscience) are essential suppers of Bolshevist propaganda both at home and abroad.

We have to thank the *Izvestia* of May 24th, 1937, for a picture of how this single candidate is elected. The election, we are told, "proceeds in a highly tense atmosphere of class struggle. What are left of the class enemies, as well as the anti-Soviet elements, have become very active. The remnants of the Trotskyite and Bucharinite bands continue to carry out their odious tasks. Vigilance, eternal vigilance! That is our duty to-day."

After this thrilling and desperate electoral struggle, the candidates put forward by the "Block of Communists and Non-Party Representatives" were seen to have won a great triumph, polling no less than 99.4 per cent. of the total vote. The remaining 0.6 per cent., representing approximately 468,000 citizens, are the "Wreckers and Diversionists" roundly denounced in daily articles in the Soviet Press and held in check by the several million members of the Soviet Secret Police.

This strange phenomenon was repeated in an even more accentuated form in the February elections in 1946, when the majority polled by the aforesaid "Block" reached 99.8 per cent. of the total poll, representing a revolutionary advance of 0.4 per cent. and justifying to the full the gigantic efforts made during the electoral campaign, which were described with such a wealth of detail in the Press throughout the world, and included squadrons of aeroplanes, innumerable special trains, the compulsory migration of peoples, etc. The progress made by the "Block" is all the more remarkable when we consider that since the previous election the Soviet electorate had been increased by several millions, the inhabitants of the annexed territories, people who but a little while before, according to the same Soviet Press, consisted largely of authentic reactionaries, bourgeois and Nazis. The only discouraging feature in the whole affair was perhaps the extremely narrow margin left for further revolutionary progress.

But even that small margin has since been swept away. In the elections which took place on December 21st, 1947, Stalin, who canvassed the suffrages of the electorate in a Moscow constituency, was elected by 131 per cent. of the registered voters. The official organ of the Russian Communist Party writes with frank pride concerning this extraordinary phenomenon:

"The extra ballot papers were dropped into the urns by citizens of neighbouring constituencies anxious to seize the opportunity to express their ardent thanks to their guide and leader" (*Pravda*, December 22nd, 1947).

In any other country anywhere in the world such a result would have been quite sufficient to invalidate the election altogether.

As the whole electoral system in the Soviet Union is a farce, it is hardly possible to speak of electoral fraud in this connection, but anywhere else in the world such a thing would be considered an anti-democratic infamy—not so in the country which possesses “the most democratic Constitution in the world.”

These December elections offer further food for thought, or perhaps dreams. For instance, the total poll came to 99.99 per cent. of the electorate—that is to say, it was even more complete than the conservation of matter in chemical experiments. Out of 10,000 registered electors, only one failed to appear at the polling booth to cast his vote. Now, the mortality rate disposes of at least one citizen per 10,000 every day of the year, whilst two others of the female sex are indisposed every day of the year and unable to leave their beds by the exigencies of the birth-rate. One can only conclude that on election days good Soviet citizens postpone their final departure from this earthly scene whilst pregnant mothers postpone their deliveries in order not to interfere with the electoral arrangements.

The Council of Nationalities in the Soviet Union is composed of twenty-five deputies from each of the federal republics, eleven from each of the autonomous republics, five from each of the autonomous provinces, three from each of the autonomous territories and one from each of the autonomous regions.

The Supreme Council meets twice a year for a period of two weeks. It designates a Presidium with plenary powers from amongst its members to represent it in the intervals between its sessions. In practice, it is this Presidium which is the Soviet “Legislature.” It is composed of a President, sixteen Vice-Presidents representing the sixteen federal republics, and twenty-four members. For a very long time the President of this Presidium was Kalinin, but at a session of the Supreme Council in March, 1946, he was replaced by Shvernik. This President of the Presidium assumes the honorary prerogatives of the “Head of the State.” Each of the sixteen federal republics and each of the autonomous republics has its own legislative chamber. These are independently elected and each also bears the title of Supreme Council.

The Executive Power

Up until March, 1946, the Soviet Government was called the Council of People's Commissars. At that time, no doubt to mark the entry of the Soviet Union into the concert of Great Powers, the old revolutionary name “Council of People's Commissars” was replaced by the traditional and universal designation “Ministry.” Thenceforth the Soviet Government was a Council of Ministers, in line with the rest of the world. The Ministers of the Soviet Government are chosen directly by the Supreme Council of the Union,

or by its Presidium. The "Federal" Ministers occupy themselves with all-Union affairs—that is to say, with the affairs of the Soviet Union as a whole. The "Federal Republican" Ministers occupy themselves with affairs simultaneously concerning the Union, the federal republics and the autonomous republics. They have their opposite numbers in all these republics. Incidentally, the latter also have Ministers who occupy themselves with affairs exclusively concerning their own nationality, such as public instruction, social insurance, small local industries and municipal undertakings. By the constitutional change introduced in February, 1944, the sixteen federal republics now each have a Minister for Foreign Affairs, a convenient fiction which permits the Soviet Union to obtain three representatives in the United Nations Organization instead of one.

The "Federal" Ministers originally numbered five: Minister for Defence; Minister for Foreign Affairs; Minister for Foreign Trade; Minister for Transport; and Minister for Posts, Telegraphy and Telephones. The Constitution of 1936 increased the number to eight; then in 1942 the Presidium added five more All-Union portfolios and in 1946 four more, thereby creating quite considerable confusion. There were Ministries for the Merchant Marine; for Inland Water Transport; for Naval Construction; for Armaments; for Heavy Industry; for Non-Ferrous Metals; for Fisheries in the Western Provinces; for Fisheries in the Eastern Provinces; for Geology; for Medical Supplies; for Luxury Goods (tobacco, perfumery, wines and spirits, etc.); and so on.

The Federal Republican Ministries ("Mixed" Affairs) numbered ten in 1936: Interior; Agriculture; *Sovkhozes*; Finance; Home Trade; Justice; Public Health; Forestry; Light Industries; and Food. In 1942 the Presidium added seven more.

The President of the Council of Ministers (Molotov until 1942 and then Stalin) is also a member of the Soviet Cabinet, so to speak, and also his six Vice-Presidents, and in addition the Presidents of the five "Committees of National Importance": Gosplan, State Bank, Fine Arts, Supplies, and Higher Education. It is noticeable that public instruction is one of the rare spheres which remain, nominally at least, the exclusive concern of the federal republics. However, higher education, which is of direct concern to the recruitment of the new ruling class, has a special administration under the guidance of an All-Union Committee, whose President is also a member of the Soviet Cabinet. Altogether the Soviet Government consists of fifty-two Ministries as compared with nineteen in 1936. This extremely complex ministerial organization was still further complicated in the spring of 1940 by the creation of six Vice-Presidents of the Council, each charged with the chairmanship of a "Committee of Co-ordination" embracing all

the Ministries interested in the same group of affairs. In reality, these six Vice-Presidents are, so to speak, the super-controllers of Stalin within the Council.

The Local Authorities

The nationality sub-divisions of the Soviet Union enjoy central authority of varying importance and more or less analogous to that of a State. We have already seen that the autonomous republics have their own Ministers.

The four sorts of territorial sub-divisions are administered by the old Soviets. These are directly elected bodies at the lowest level of the hierarchy. They delegate a certain number of their members to form part of the next superior body, and this does the same a step higher, and so on up to the highest body, that of the province. The Soviets rarely meet in plenary session and in practice they are represented by their executive committees, and these in their turn are represented in practice by their secretaries.

It is important to realize that the Constitution (Articles 20, 50 and 69) authorizes superior bodies to annul at will any decision taken by a lower organ, to quash any nomination made by a lower organ, and to give executive orders which are binding on these lower organs. Thus the theoretical autonomy of Soviet local authorities is a fiction. All that happens in practice is that the central authorities pass on the administration of certain affairs to the local authorities, whilst reserving the right at all times to withdraw it if they think fit.

The rights of the nationality groups amount in the end to nothing more than the use of their own tongue in education and administration. The policy of the central authorities tends more and more to suppress local patriotism in favour of All-Union patriotism. The suicide at the beginning of 1933 of Skrypnick, the Ukrainian Commissar for Education, who had done his best to encourage specifically Ukrainian tendencies, effectively illuminated the new policy of Soviet nationalism.

A Soviet Land without Soviets

Prior to November, 1936, the soviet structure—which no longer exists except in local affairs—rose in a pyramid to the All-Union stage where it formed, after five or six successive stages of delegation, the supreme organ known as the All-Russia Congress of Soviets. This organ consisted of several thousand members and met only rarely. From its ranks it elected a smaller body known as the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets (T.S.I.K.), which was, nevertheless, more like a parliament in size than a committee. It consisted of 500 or 600 members divided between two councils

known as the Union Council and the Council of Nationalities. The present Supreme Council corresponds to this T.S.I.K. rather than to the All-Russia Congress of Soviets.

This Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, or T.S.I.K., also met only rarely, and it therefore elected a Presidium from amongst its members, in the same way as the present Supreme Council does, to carry on its work between meetings.

What there was particularly democratic about this soviet system has never been easy to see, and the only time the soviets played a popular role was during the revolution. In the particular form of factory soviets or urban soviets in industrial towns they represented convenient organs of working-class assembly, often *en masse*, and they effectively assumed police functions, organized food and other supplies and took control of industry and economic life. These soviets were, in short, the organs of local action. But once the formation of superior organs of a more permanent character devoted to administrative tasks of a civil and not revolutionary character demanded the election of successive delegations in a regular pyramid, the system became as undemocratic as all systems formed by successive indirect stages are. A prominent revolutionary like Rosa Luxemburg always considered that the absence of a directly elected parliament of a Western European character was a sign of serious political immaturity on the part of the Russian masses. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that although the new Constitution has replaced the soviet system, "the most democratic in the world," by a parliamentary form, this latter is now none the less "the most democratic in the world." One of the many mysteries presented by the hierarchy of values in the country of the permanent superlative.

Inalienable Rights—and what happened to Them

The new Stalinist Constitution proudly proclaims the fundamental and inalienable rights of the individual citizen, including "the right to work," "the right to leisure," "the right to education," "the right to a pension," and so on. Less than a year after the solemn promulgation of all these rights, labour legislation was introduced which simply and specifically abrogated the greater part of them, although the Constitution expressly forbids any organization whatsoever, no matter how authoritative it may otherwise be, to modify any single one of them. This repeal legislation was promulgated by decrees bearing the signatures of Stalin and Molotov. It was not previously discussed even in the Presidium.

The reader will be less astonished by this brutal and cynical violation of yesterday's promises if he remembers that the only party authorized to exist in the Soviet Union by the same Constitution officially professes the doctrine of cynicism. On June 22nd,

1936, ten days after the publication of the draft of "the most democratic Constitution in the world," the *Pravda* wrote:

"The cowardly bourgeois, Menshevist [Social-Democratic] and counter-revolutionary Press has been exterminated for ever in our Soviet country. . . . Whoever aims at overthrowing the Socialist régime and damaging the Socialist property of the people is an enemy of the people. He will never receive so much as a scrap of paper in the Soviet Union or be able to cross the threshold of a single printing works in pursuit of his fell designs. He will never find a hall, a room or a corner in which to disseminate his poisonous doctrines."

And the *Izvestia* outdid even the *Pravda*. In its issue of August 6th, 1936, it wrote:

"We can have no meetings of fools; and we can certainly have no meetings of criminals, monarchists, Mensheviks, Social-Revolutionaries and the like."

The Soviet Secret Police has often changed its name, but its methods and its omnipotent powers have never varied one iota. For instance, at the first plenary session of the new Supreme Council eighty of the 600 delegates did not answer the roll. They had been arrested by the Secret Police in the interval between their election and the opening of the session.

Ministers elected by the people disappear and are replaced without any further session, except perhaps a session of the Presidium. Since the promulgation of "the most democratic Constitution in the world," the following Ministers have vanished, many of them by physical extermination: Tuchachevsky of the Ministry of National Defence, sentenced to death in March, 1937, by, *inter alia*, Gamarnik; Gamarnik of the Ministry of National Defence, who is reported to have "committed suicide" in October, 1937; Egorov of the Ministry of National Defence; Yegov, Minister of the Interior, executed in November, 1937, to make way for Beria; Grinko, Minister of Finance, eliminated in July, 1937, to make way for Tchubar; Tchubar, executed to make way for Zverev; Tchernov, Minister of Agriculture, executed in November, 1937, to make way for Aikhe; Aikhe, executed in November, 1938, to make way for Benediktov. And many others not so well known. And in 1941 numerous People's Commissars found themselves invited to recall and take to heart "the lessons of the Eighteenth Party Congress"—or else.

However, the most glaring discord between the text of the Constitution and existing reality is furnished by the extraordinary position held by Stalin himself in the whole scheme of Soviet governance. In the state of Soviet law up to 1942 Stalin enjoyed no governmental authority whatsoever. Certainly he was Secretary of the Communist Party and a member of its Political Bureau, but as

far as affairs of State were concerned his only title to play any role was that of a Deputy for Moscow and a member of the Presidium (Soviet Parliament). He was not a Minister of any kind. Prior to 1935 he was not even a member of the Presidium (at that time of the Central Executive Committee, or T.S.I.K.). Nevertheless, he took a decisive part in all diplomatic conferences and his signature was appended to all important documents. It was only in 1942 in the most dangerous period of the German invasion that he was given official titles corresponding to his actual functions as head of the Soviet Government.

After all that has now been said, we think it justifiable to declare that the Soviet Constitution is nothing but a scrap of paper. Let us leave it and turn to the real source of power in the Soviet Union: the Communist Party and its leader.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY, UNIQUE AND DOMINANT

ON THE EVE OF THE war the Russian Communist Party numbered two and a half million active members and half a million candidates. By 1945, according to the statement of the *Bolshevik*, No. 1, 1945, the total of members and candidates together had grown to the imposing figure of five and a half millions—that is to say, the party embraced approximately 3 per cent. of the total population.

No information concerning its social composition has been made available for a long time now, but all evidence goes to show that the number of worker and peasant members does not exceed the amount strictly necessary to preserve contact with the anonymous masses, to form action groups and to figure as the proletariat at public meetings where publicity is a prime consideration.

The Internal Life of the Party

Marcel Yvon, a French trade unionist who lived in the Soviet Union for eleven years variously as an ordinary worker, a foreman, the director of a factory and a professor at the Communist Oriental University, knew the atmosphere inside the Communist Party of the Soviet Union very well, for he was a member of it. The description which he gives has been confirmed by numerous other witnesses.

Before the opening of a recruiting campaign, the aspirants for membership mobilize all their recommendations, solicit support from every possible quarter, and use every available combination to secure their admission. The Central Committee of the party decides in advance, according to the exigencies of the moment, what percentages of the new levy shall be recruited in each particular social group. Each candidate has to pass an examination in the local Communist cell, and the District Committee then decides whether he shall be admitted or not. To secure admission, a candidate must "know his catechism by heart and give convincing proofs of future docility." It is not the votes of the membership which admit a new member, as is the case in all democratic organizations in other countries, but a committee decision at a higher level.

What privileges does the so ardently solicited party card give its lucky possessor? The first privilege is that of absolute obedience.

"The party demands of all its members, first of all and at all times, absolute and blind obedience to all the orders of superior bodies. In every aspect of his life a party member must act in accordance with party discipline, and he must guide his whole life by the principle that 'at all times and on all occasions he is first and foremost a member of the party.' Further, in every conversation he must be able to rattle off the phrases of the catechism in force for the time being. And, finally, he must cultivate his qualities as an organizer, a 'leader,' and an orator in order to contribute as far as possible to the success of the party slogans and the party manoeuvres and policy" (Yvon, p. 73).

The strictly military character of Communist Party discipline becomes apparent when we know that the superior organs of the party have the right to send any member, anywhere, on any mission, at any time and without question.

It might appear astonishing that such onerous conditions of membership nevertheless do not prevent great numbers from wishing to join the party. There are two reasons for this. For one thing, the party does not fail to reward its members for the sacrifices of time and independence it demands from them. The party is the springboard to all higher office and position. In fact, it represents the only basis on which a citizen of the Soviet Union can rise to a higher position unless he is in possession of technical qualifications of a high order. In a society as poor as the final chapters of this book will show the Soviet Union to be, even the most modest financial advantage, the privilege of spending holidays in a rest home, a living space more or less tolerable, and even the bare possibility of eating one's fill are all celestial gifts.

At all stages of Soviet life we shall see that extraordinary magnetism which is exercised by a little privilege amidst general mass misery. However, there are other ways apart from the Communist Party by which the Soviet citizen can augment his very low income: "Socialist competition" for the workers and technical skill for the intellectuals. Both these ways, are of course, crowded with jostling aspirants, but they have not that mystical aura which surrounds membership of the Communist Party. Here we border on the sphere of psychological motives whose powers are so terrible, that we must make a special effort to analyse the phenomenon.

The party is the temple of that redoubtable goddess whose origins are surrounded with so much sinister mystery and whose cult has fashioned the fate of millions of innocents: the goddess called "the General Line." Although the rank and file of the Communist Party no longer take any appreciable part in the formulation of policy, they are informed of it before the others and more effectively than the others, and that is a definite advantage. The ordinary party member is like the good little boy who is

favoured by teacher, taken to one side to have teacher's aims explained to him, and honoured with the exalted task of serving as a model for all the other little boys. He is the favourite; he is on teacher's side; and he backs up everything teacher does as well as he can. And, naturally, towards the rest of the class he is a little authority himself. In obeying he receives the power to be obeyed. The personality sacrificed in passive obedience is recovered, respected and feared, in the joy of domination. Don't talk to him about leaders subject to recall, about principles freely discussed, about fraternal solidarity. Independence implies that each man is able to look after his own affairs, and that he is unable to do. Masters above me, slogans within me, and slaves below me—that is his moral equilibrium.

The activity, often obscure, which fills his day spares him from intellectual doubts and brings him nearer to the aim set by the powers above him. But is that aim in conformity with the ideal he once upheld? He is not sure any more, and in any case he has no desire to be exigent. The sight of an old symbol inscribed on a banner satisfies him. Has he not joined the party to act rather than to think? And surely in the long run the ideal will be what his devotion has served? It is the eternal tragi-comedy by which slavery persists despite all progress: having shaped an effective organization, the Communist bows down and worships it. He has made the party, originally destined to be the instrument of reason, into the tyrannous object of his devotion. An association originally intended to be merely a means to an end has become an end in itself. And after that, if they ask him to say that black is white, he will say that black is white, and if they ask him to believe it, he will believe it; if they ask him to become a spy, he will become a spy; if they ask him to torture his fellow men, he will torture his fellow men; if they order him to commit a dishonourable action, he will commit that dishonourable action; and, finally, if they ask him to die blessing his murderer, he will die so doing. The diabolical wheel of fanaticism has turned full circle.

We do not pretend that these few considerations exhaust so wide a theme. Why, for instance, has this modern resurrection of all the social maladies of the Dark Ages become so closely associated with the aspirations of modern Socialism? And why do we find exactly the same characteristics in the only other "dynamic" movement of our times, Fascism? Perhaps we shall have an opportunity later of returning to these unexpected and painful similarities. For the moment let it suffice that we have penetrated the psychological secret of the attraction exercised by the one authorized political party in the Soviet Union on the teeming masses of would-be recruits.

The Weapon of Excommunication

We are no longer surprised at the fact that the Communist Party has a rod in pickle for its members in addition to the material and psychological privileges it offers them. In fact, the party deliberately makes use of the stick and the carrot, in much the same way as a heartless and dominating woman employs the weapon of cruel coquetry to keep her admirers enslaved. For instance, the party distributes its membership cards with deliberate parsimony in order to make them still more sought after, whilst at the same time it holds all its members under the constant threat of disgrace and expulsion.

Purging is a practice in constant use in the Communist Party and the Soviet Union generally. Expulsion from the party, deliberately made as public as possible, is a more terrible fate in the Soviet Union to-day than ever excommunication with bell, book and candle was in the Middle Ages. The threat of expulsion is the most effective means in the hands of the Central Committee for making itself obeyed absolutely. When it is exercised in a wide-scale purge, it also permits the party to recruit new members burning with a desire to do better than those they have replaced.

In his report to the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party, Kaganovitch, who has since himself been superseded, gave the following information, supplied to him by the great purger Rudzutak, since executed, concerning the purge then proceeding:

"You know that the party is engaged in a purge of its ranks. Comrade Rudzutak has dealt with the matter in detail in his report. During the purge we expelled 182,500 members of the party, representing 16.8 per cent. of the membership: 2.7 per cent. of these were expelled for belonging to hostile classes, 0.9 per cent. for political hypocrisy, 3.5 per cent. for violating party discipline, 1.5 per cent. for political degeneration, 1.5 per cent. for being careerists, 2 per cent. for immorality and leading a disordered life, 4.2 per cent. for passivity, and 0.6 per cent. for other causes" (Kaganovitch, p. 19).

When we know with what scrupulous care the dossiers of all candidates for membership of the Communist Party are studied before they are admitted we can only find it astonishing that at a later date the Central Committee of the party should suddenly discover that 25,000 party members belong to "hostile classes." And how do the Stalinist leaders reconcile their admission of so many evil elements into their party with their constant boast of its permanent unanimity? If 16.2 per cent. of all these unanimous Communists were violating their consciences when they voted, how much good is that sort of unanimity? Or if they did vote honestly, what was behind the purge?

The fear of being expelled not only makes a party member guard his least word or action and obey all orders with military precision, but it also makes him pathologically afraid of showing the least initiative. Here we discover another chink in the armour of Bolshevism, a defect it shares, incidentally, with all other disciplinarian systems: it has the power to make its orders obeyed, but those who obey them are robots. To make the human spirit mechanical is the reverse of making it fanatical. Slogans applied with ruthless brutality and zeal result in such an accumulation of abuses and defects that the leaders are frequently compelled to issue "counter-slogans." This process of trial and error, of balance and counter-balance, can go on indefinitely.

For instance, in 1938, in preparation for the elections to the Supreme Council, a new "thorough purge" of the party was ordered, and at the end of it Yegov, the chief of the Secret Police, was able to announce 240,296 expulsions within the course of a year. That rain of excommunications was obviously too heavy, for no sooner were the elections over than the Central Committee of the party published a resolution denying its responsibility and accusing "wreckers" of having exploited the purge to exclude healthy elements from the party. The *Pravda* of January 16th, 1938, gives us the following examples:

"On November 5th, 1937, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan mechanically expelled 279 members without any investigation. . . . At Orjonnikidze 150 members were expelled; 101 of them have been reinstated because they were expelled without reason. At Novosibirsk 51 of the 80 members expelled have since been reinstated; at Stalingrad 58 out of 103; at Vinnitza 164 out of 337; and so on."

As a punishment for these excesses the Central Committee decided to purge the purgers, and the excesses began all over again. And only a few years later, in February, 1941, the Eighteenth Congress of the party enthusiastically decided to carry out another purge, and it started off with a bang: expulsions everywhere, together with wholesale dismissal of directors and managers. And in August, 1946, a new tidal wave of expulsions swept over the party. According to the statement of Nikita Chrustchev of the Political Bureau, no less than 64 per cent. of all the leading Communists of the Ukraine were expelled and 67 per cent. of all directors of tractor stations dismissed.

From Iron Cohorts to Court Toadies

Once the hunger for privilege is added to the desire for power, once ambition and self-interest begin to flourish, then no power whatever can stem the growth of nepotism, intrigue and toadyism. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is no exception to that

general rule. In these developments it has experienced a new and bitter accompaniment of totalitarianism. Authoritarian organizations are always more easily permeated by the agents of a bad cause than organizations in which ideas are freely discussed and decisions made dependent on a free majority vote. If it is sufficient to obey in order to obtain a place, if it is sufficient to repeat slogans mechanically in order to preserve that place, then advancement no longer depends on merit, but on servility. And when the loss of that place is equivalent to a death sentence, then the road to power becomes a twisting, winding path through a fierce and bloody jungle, whilst suspicion, denunciation and fear riddle the once immaculate organ. Since the Master loves to punish the enemies of the people, and since in so doing he makes room for other aspirants to place and power, then the ambitious will provide him with traitors even in the ranks of his own party.

"A counter-revolutionary organization has been discovered amongst the students of the Institute of Engineers (Inland Water Transport) at Odessa. At the head of this organization was the 'enemy of the people' Golodny, who occupied the position of Secretary to the Communist Youth Committee of the Institute. Comrade Bronstein has been appointed in the place of Golodny. After five months all the work of the Young Communists in the Institute had been sabotaged. . . . This treason was not limited to students of the Institute; Fishman, Secretary to the Communist Youth Committee of the Port of Odessa, Gavelko, a member of the Editorial Board of the Port Journal, and a number of teachers at the Regional Political School also figured amongst the traitors" (*Ukrainsky Komsomol*, No. 47, 1937).

Can one imagine in France or Great Britain, or in any other country whatsoever where men can still call their souls their own, the official organ of an important political organization denouncing numerous leading members of its own party in such defamatory terms? What a hue and cry there would be! Not so in the Soviet Union. There the newspaper reader knows very well that it is just a normal settling of accounts amongst Communists and he prudently goes on to the next item. And the following day the accusations, abuse and perfidies appear again, and the general silence still remains profound. Very often the central organ of the party itself strikes the opening note:

"We know that the enemies of the people have encouraged a bourgeois attitude towards life in the Komsomol, including drunkenness and nepotism amongst its members. These enemies of the people have demoralized the leaders of the Komsomol organizations both morally and politically, and not bothered their heads about the ideological training of the youth and the teaching of Marxist-Leninism amongst the Komsomol cadres. This explains

why the ranks of the Komsomol have been invaded by the enemies of the people and how the Fascist spies have succeeded in enticing certain leaders of the Komsomol along the path of treason" (*Pravda*, November 22nd, 1938).

What can a satrap develop into if he owes everything to the powers that be? A toady. What can a toady who knows that he is incompetent really do? Intrigue against his fellow toadies. That sequence of events is as old as the world. The only thing new about it in the case of the Soviet Union is that those responsible for it have succeeded in convincing many Socialists of good faith that it is a wholly admirable thing.

The Party Organization

The First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Stalin, is irremovable; his power is absolute and unlimited. His counsellors and assistants give him advice which he is at liberty to ignore. For the most part the party "activists" are chosen from amongst the lower classes in order that their rise to the position of "leaders" shall fill their hearts with gratitude to the organization which made it possible. The driving force of the struggle is not so much the obtaining of material advantages as the passion to control others. The party recognizes only one rule of conduct: that "the end justifies the means," and the ideal end is soon forgotten in favour of the practical end, which can be summed up in one word: power.

The basic organization of the party is the cell. Such a cell embraces all members working in the same place, whether factory, workshop, *kolkhoz*, regiment or Ministry. In really democratic political organizations the members are organized not according to their place of work, but according to where they live, i.e. territorially. In this way members have a chance of meeting people other than those with whom they rub shoulders at their place of work every day; they can discuss social problems in non-professional or occupational terms; they can learn to discuss things before a larger audience; they can observe the interesting reactions of other and different people; in short, they can raise themselves to the real level of political life and the examination of broad general principles. In other words, they can do precisely everything Bolshevism seeks to prevent their doing by its organization on the basis of the place of work, which is demagogically justified on the specious grounds that it directly canalizes a proletarian flow from factory to party. The factory cell, often sub-divided into workshop cells in a larger factory, has a limited membership and a limited horizon which makes it nothing but a cog in the machine of the all-powerful "apparatus." Operating where the work of society is performed and where wages and salaries are paid out, the cell

organization is an excellent instrument of propaganda, control, manoeuvre and intimidation in the hands of the party.

The duties of the subordinate organizations of the party are laid down as follows in the party statutes:

"The primary organizations of the party attach the masses of the workers and peasants to the leading organs of the party. Their tasks are:

"1. To conduct agitation and organization amongst the masses in favour of the slogans and decisions of the party;

"2. To assist the higher organs of the party in their work of agitation and organization at all times;

"3. To mobilize the masses at the factory, *sovkhوزه* or *kolkhoz* to carry out the production plan, to reinforce labour discipline and to develop shock labour tactics."

The third task in particular is worth noting, for it is another indication that everything in the Soviet Union is directed towards increasing the rate of exploitation.

A record card for each cell member is kept on the file by the cell secretary, and it is the member's duty to assist the secretary to keep it up to date and comprehensive by informing him, often in public, of all matters of importance affecting his public and private life. This does not in the least prevent the "activist" who goes to public confession in this way from himself being a member of the Secret Police charged with watching his confessor.

The cell is directed by a bureau which it "elects." The members of this bureau appoint a secretary, and this secretary is all powerful in the cell. Above the cell in the organizational hierarchy are other bodies each composed of delegates from subordinate bodies. These are the "committees" of the various stages. The organizational hierarchy of these committees is similar to that of the State power. Each stage of the State power embracing a certain territory finds at its elbow a similar stage of the Communist Party embracing all the Communists in that particular territory. At every stage each committee of the party elects itself a bureau, and this bureau appoints itself a secretary. This secretary is the veritable governor of the territory covered by his committee, and he has considerably more power than the constitutional representative of the citizens living in that territory. The latter must obey the former. A decision of the Central Committee of the party dated December, 1935, gives such secretaries the exorbitant power to carry out purges on their own, with the one proviso that after the event they must submit their decision for the approval of their bureau.

In practice and without exception, the members of these bureaux and their secretaries are proposed for their offices either by the party organizations immediately above, by the outgoing members of the bureau or by the outgoing secretaries. It is not difficult to

imagine that a candidate, or a list of candidates, "proposed" by a higher party organ is a candidate, or a list of candidates, already elected. With this simple procedure, Stalin has posted his creatures in all the leading organs of the Communist Party. When a congress composed of delegates appointed by Stalin unanimously elects Stalin General Secretary of the party, then one cannot help being reminded of those cup-and-ball games in which the ball is so attached to the cup that, thrown into the air, it must inevitably fall back into the cup.

The Central Committee of the Party

"In the centre of Moscow there is a massive and imposing building whose entrances are closely guarded by agents of the G.P.U. in uniform. Inside there is a department with huge card indexes and pigeon-holed dossiers. Here, carefully classified and numbered, and ready for instant use, are the records of all 'responsible' persons of any importance whatsoever working anywhere in the vast Soviet Union whether in political or economic life.

"It is the Headquarters of the Central Committee of the Communist Party" (Yvon).

The Central Committee consists of seventy-one members and sixty-eight candidate members nominated by the Party Congress. According to the Party Statutes, this Congress should meet every year, but in fact it meets approximately every three or four years. Between Congresses the supreme organ of the party is its Central Committee, and orders issuing from this body are superior to those of the Council of Ministers itself.

The Central Committee elects the following three executive organs from amongst its members:

1. The Political Bureau, known as the "Politbureau." Since 1946 this organ has been composed of ten members: Stalin, Malenkov, Andreiev, Zhdanov, Voroshilov, Kaganovitch, Beria, Mikoyan, Molotov and Chrustchev; and four candidates: Bulganine, Veznesensky, Kozygin and Schvernink;

2. The Organizational Bureau, or "Orgbureau," composed of nine members, including Stalin, Malenkov and Zhdanov; and

3. The Secretariat, composed of four members: Stalin, Andreiev, Zhdanov and Malenkov.

Thus Stalin, Malenkov and Zhdanov are members of all three.

At one time the Political Bureau played the principal role, but nowadays it is convened only at rare and irregular intervals. It has become a consultative organ, and in practice it confines itself to registering the instructions of the Secretariat. The task of the Organizational Bureau is to pass on the decisions of the Secretariat throughout the whole vast party apparatus and to see to their

execution. The Secretariat has become the essential organ of the party. Stalin no longer has the title of "General Secretary," but the more modest one of "First Secretary." He none the less remains the absolute master of the other three secretaries, all of whom were personally proposed by him for their positions.

Side by side with the Central Committee of the party there is a second organ elected by the Congress which has a certain importance—that is, the Central Control Commission. Its task is to settle inner-party disputes, to sanction various punitive measures and, in concert with the Secretariat, to wield the terrible weapon of expulsion. Thus Stalin's first care when he became General Secretary of the party in 1922 was to see that the Central Control Commission was occupied by men on whom he could rely. A decision of the Central Committee dated February 27th, 1934, and published the following day in the *Pravda*, authorized the Central Control Commission to control the conformism of all the employees of the State, whether members of the party or not, a thing it had been doing for a long time without authorization.

The Communist Party dominates the Country

The complete dominance exercised by the Communist Party over all spheres of life in the Soviet Union is denied by no one. It is documented in Article 126 of the Stalinist Constitution. For the first time in the history of constitutions, here is one which includes judgments and estimations of the citizens whose political weal it regulates.

"The most active and conscious citizens of the working class and of other sections of the working population are united in the Communist (Bolshevist) Party of the Soviet Union as the advance guard of all the toilers in their struggle to consolidate and develop the Socialist régime, as the core of all organizations, both social and governmental, and as the only political party which has the right to organize itself in the Soviet Union."

What follows is therefore not intended to demonstrate an undisputed fact, but to establish its importance and significance.

On the evening of the promulgation of the new Constitution, the following were the percentages of Communists in the various representative organs of the State:

	<i>Per cent.</i>
Grade I (local soviets or State undertakings) . . .	55
Grade II (Autonomous Republics or Regions) . . .	68
Grade III (All-Russia Congress of Soviets) . . .	81
Grade IV (Central Executive Committee) . . .	98
Grade V (Presidium and Councils, etc.) . . .	100

They were made public at the Eighth Congress of the Soviets, and they show that the higher the organ the greater the percentage of Communists in it, until in the highest State organs there are nothing but Communists.

The Union Council and the Council of Nationalities created by the new Constitution contain respectively 81 per cent. and 71 per cent. of Communist members (*Pravda*, January 15th, 1938), which is more or less analogous to the proportion in the parliament elected in February, 1946. In the Presidium the Communists are completely on their own, 100 per cent. strong. The party membership percentage in the upper reaches of the officers corps of the Red Army is: colonels, 72 per cent.; divisional generals, 90 per cent.; generals commanding army corps, 100 per cent. (Commissariat for National Defence, figures quoted by Luciani). Between 75 per cent. and 80 per cent. of all professors and students at the principal universities are also members of the Communist Party. In conclusion, it is interesting to recall that only 3 per cent. of the total population of the Soviet Union is Communist.

An old tactic of Bolshevism exploited in all countries, is the institution of "auxiliary organizations," and it does not omit to do the same at home. The Soviet Union is covered with a network of nominally independent organizations covering all phases of public life. There is one for the encouragement of aviation, another for the care of sucklings, a third to look after horses, and so on. Amateur photographers are organized; amateur singers likewise; and even those who like solitary rambles are organized. All Soviet citizens between the ages of ten and eighteen are in some sort of organization, and so are those who are older, and so are those who are younger. The Friends of Books are organized, the amateurs of Uzbek iconography are organized, as also the friends of the friends. There is an organization for the wives of factory directors, another for the mothers of Army officers, one for young women, and another for those no longer young. In all these organizations of Soviet citizens, as in all the offices and organizations of the State, Communist members are specially organized again into "fractions" under the direction of a central directing body for the whole organization. These fractions vote *en bloc* for the resolutions or candidates put forward by the Communist Party. The non-Communist members of all these organizations naturally hasten to vote the same way as "the fraction" and always propose its members for administrative and other posts in their organizations. In this way the Communist Party keeps a close control over even the less important phases of public life. Nothing whatever escapes its tentacles.

By a decision of the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party, Stalin added a department known as the Direction of Cadres

to the Secretariat. The task of this new department is to co-ordinate all nominations to responsible functions, whether in the party itself, in the State apparatus or in economic life.

"In what does the task consist at the moment? The task consists at the moment of concentrating the choice of cadres from the base to the summit of the pyramid into the hands of one single organization, and to raise the level of this work to the required height, to the height of a science, to a Bolshevik level. . . . For that it is necessary in future to make an end of the dispersal of the study of promotions and the choice of cadres over multifarious sections and sectors, and to concentrate this work at one single point" (Stalin, IX, p. 42).

No nomination of any importance is now carried out before it has received the approval of this controlling body. Like most Soviet decrees, this one does no more than officially sanction a well-established practice. It shows simply that the integral control of the Communist Party over all phases of public life in the Soviet Union is no longer satisfied with being indirect, and now documents itself directly and openly in the full light of day.

Part of the strength of the Communist Party derives from the immensity of the Soviet Union and from the complexity of its public administration. Amidst the vast conglomeration of villages and races, in the confusion of political, economic and cultural organizations, over steppes without end and masses without culture, the party is the one connecting link, the circulatory system which transmits tidings and decisions; it is the body in which the particular is subordinated to the general. In it and by it the director of a syndicate in Moscow, the leader of a *kolkhoze* in the Ukraine, a Minister in Turkmenistan, and a colonel in Vladivostok speak the same language and work for the same end. Dispersion and poverty amongst the masses of the people have always favoured the establishment of absolute power. The Communist power is swollen by the wind of the vast Russian steppes, just as the Czarist bureaucracy was before it.

However, the Communist Party is not merely the connecting link holding together the wide Russian spaces; it is also a pace-maker, a stimulating and directing factor. We have already stressed, and we shall see innumerable instances of it, that the party is the managing director of the process of industrialization. Nothing whatever is done without its approval and intervention. For instance, the Stakhanovite movement, whose aim was to set up progressively higher individual production records, is presented in the Communist Press all over the world as a spontaneous movement originating amongst the masses of the Russian workers themselves, but in reality it was organized from beginning to end by the party. Stakhanov himself declared at a congress:

"It was Dukhanov, the Secretary of the Committee, and Petrov, the political organizer of the mine, who organized the first Stakhanovites" (*Russie d'aujourd'hui*, January, 1936).

And the *Pravda* of November 18th, 1935, informs us:

"The Secretary of the party stayed with Stakhanov all the time, giving him light with a miner's lamp."

It is a good symbol: the Communist Party "gave light" to this "greatest of all spontaneous movements amongst the working masses." The *Pravda* of May 22nd, 1936, tells us that during the course of a conference of managers and engineers of the Novosibirsk works unanimous objections were put forward by the technicians against the introduction of Stakhanovite methods, but the Secretary of the Regional Committee of the party ignored them and so Stakhanovism (with all its serious industrial accidents) was introduced in Novosibirsk.

After the war the party, "putting old wine into new bottles," introduced a new spontaneous movement called Matrossovism, after a worker named Matrossov employed at a boot and shoe factory in Moscow. One day this worker decided to call a meeting of his fellow workers to inform them of the ways and means he had worked out to increase production. The *Pravda* took the matter up, and, of course, so did all the other Soviet newspapers, and after that the workers throughout the country were seized with a "spontaneous" desire to emulate the methods of the new "Hero of Labour," and the country was quickly covered with a network of Matro-soviets, a sort of evening class at which the workers learned the new technique outside working hours instead of as normally in their working time. Overcome by the sudden mass movement, the Plenum of the party noted "with surprise and delight" this "grand initiative of a new Soviet Hero of Labour," decided that "new historic tasks" were now incumbent on it, and decreed in consequence a progressive increase in the bonuses for exceeding the working norm—not proportionately as before—and lowered the rate for piece-work (cf. the Plenum of the party and the new collective agreements of February, 1947).

The Communist Party dominates the Labour Unions

In 1929, at the decision of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, Tomski, General Secretary of the Soviet Labour Unions, and his chief assistants were deprived of office and replaced by more docile men (Shvernink, Tsikhon, etc.).

It is worth while giving a little thought to this incident. In the eyes of all Socialists the trade-union movement is of the greatest importance. The unions have been built up patiently, and often heroically, by generations of workers, and their Statutes possess almost the solemnity of laws. The dismissal of a general secretary

is inconceivable without meetings of the unions everywhere, the calling of congresses, and the holding of lively discussions and debates on the pros and cons of the matter in which all organized workers take part. But that, of course, does not refer to the Land of the Soviets, "the most democratic country in the world." There the whole revolution takes place silently behind the scenes without the members of the unions knowing anything about it until a body completely outside the trade-union movement publishes a simple communiqué, informing them of it. After that the Press takes cognizance of the *fait accompli* in the form of a fierce campaign of abuse against "the band of counter-revolutionaries" who but a day before were the respected leaders of the trade-union movement—and all the trade-union papers hurry to contribute their share to the howl of denigration.

In 1931 the Communist Party ordered the trade unions to carry out the slogan of Stalin: "We must turn our faces to production." Immediately the Central Council of Soviet Labour Unions adopted the requisite resolution:

"The primary aim of the unions is to fight for an increase of production on the part of the workers, to reduce the costs of production and to establish stricter labour discipline" (*Informations Sociales*, February 23rd, 1931).

Ten years later the same thing: the Communist Party having decreed (June 26th, 1940) for the umpteenth time that labour discipline in Soviet factories must be tightened up, the Central Council of Soviet Labour Unions met, not in order to discuss ways and means of improving the conditions of trade unionists, but in order to give Mme. Nikolaieva a chance to thunder against "the survival of sordid tendencies to a general levelling, and to demand the reinforcement of discipline in the factories, the increase of production, and the strictest possible obedience to the instructions of our great Communist Party."

In February, 1947, a draft "collective-type contract" was distributed by the Plenum of the party to all labour union secretaries with instructions that they should be guided and "inspired" by it. In other words, they were to follow it to the letter, if they could not succeed in outdoing it. This "contract" engages the workers in advance to increase production for the same wages, to emulate the improvements in working introduced by the Matrossovs, to take the greatest possible care of their machines, tools, etc., to battle against all waste of time, to submit to the strictest labour discipline without a murmur, and to supervise each other in the performance of all these tasks.

The trade union in the role of slave-driver urging on all its members to produce more and always to do as they are told without question is a particular blossom of Soviet Socialism, and worthy of

a little study. However, the thing which primarily interests us here is the servile synchronization of "the tasks of the unions" with every slogan and decree of the Communist Party. The fusion of the Soviet Labour Unions with the Commissariat for Labour, decreed in 1933, was welcomed in the central organ of Soviet Labour Unions with the following expression of faithful homage and loyalty:

"Together with Socialist competition, the struggle against the levelling of wages and for improved labour discipline, the propaganda in favour of Communism and for the realization of the present policy of the Communist Party must figure in the forefront of all trade-union activity" (*Trud*, June 21st, 1933).

Speaking at the Eighth Congress of Soviet Labour Unions in April, 1937, Shvernik defined the exact role of the organizations he leads:

"Since their foundation, our unions have worked under the direction of the party of Lenin and Stalin, fulfilling the function of a transmission band between the party and the masses."

This figure of speech is a very popular one in the Soviet Union, and we find it used at all stages of the Soviet edifice. The Secretariat is a transmission band between Stalin and the Central Committee of the party; the Central Committee of the party is a transmission band between the Secretariat and the party cells; the party cells are a transmission band between the party Central Committee and the unions; the unions are a transmission band between the party cells and the masses. And the masses of the people are a transmission band between the process of industrialization and the cemetery.

At a meeting of the Central Council of Soviet Labour Unions held in April, 1941, the servility of "the class organizations of the Russian proletariat" was demonstrated once again in the typical Soviet form of "self-criticism" through the mouth of their leader, Shvernik, who declared: "We are still not a sufficiently active and efficient school for the Communist Party."

It is not difficult to imagine that in unions so thoroughly domesticated the representative principle is a mere façade.

When from time to time the Soviet leaders feel that a purge of the unions is about due, they impute to them all the evils from which the masses of the people in the Soviet Union are suffering. Thus the unions take their useful place in the long line of safety valves at the disposal of the Soviet régime, together with "self-criticism," sabotage, Trotskyism, foreign espionage, and so on. And then, suddenly, facts are revealed which but yesterday were angrily denied.

The *Izvestia* of March 28th and of May 16th, 1937, reveals the fact that the Central Council of Soviet Labour Unions consists

entirely of appointed members, not one of whom was elected by members of the unions. The same admission is contained in the *Pravda* of May 29th, 1935, which also informs us that "instead of activists elected there are salaried officials" in the unions.

Speaking at the Sixth Congress of Soviet Labour Unions in April, 1937, Shvernik declared:

"A great number of workers do not regard the Committees as elected organs responsible to the masses, but as a sort of Chancellory" (*Les Questions Syndicales*, May, 1937).

The Communist Party dominates the Countryside

After 1928 the collectivization of Russian agriculture was the chief occupation of the Soviet power. It was in connection with this campaign that the main resistance of the masses of the Russian peasants and the major repressive violence of the Communist Party took place over a number of years.

From the beginning of the new campaign the party, according to Kaganovitch, proceeded "to choose several thousand tried and tested Bolsheviks and send them out to the villages." This process was called "The levy of the 25,000." Paumier, a member of the National Committee of the French organization of "The Friends of the Soviet Union," describes it in the following terms:

"In many areas, in consequence of the measures introduced by the 'Leftists,' which were often brutal towards the *kolkhozes*, there were anti-*kolkhoze* demonstrations, and under the influence of the *kulaks* they degenerated into demonstrations against the Soviet power. The reply was prompt: at the end of 1929, 25,000 militant Communists left for the rural areas in order to remedy the situation.

"Many were killed at their battle posts; others remained away for years without seeing their families. In 1935 I made the acquaintance of one of these heroes who was sent into the Vladivostok region and who had succeeded in turning more than 500 villages into active and reliable *kolkhozes*" (Paumier, pp. 43-4).

"Many were killed at their battle posts"; the phrase conveys all the atmosphere of civil war in which the fight for agricultural collectivisation took place. The "tried and trusted" Communists were naturally not alone in the battle; they were merely the élite troops. They were seconded by an imposing mobilization of secret police, whilst the labour unions, still in the tow of the party, also hurried "to send thousands of their members to work permanently in the direction of the *kolkhozes*" (*Cahier du V.O.K.S.*, March, 1939).

The *Izvestia* of December 31st, 1930, tells its readers that of the main levy, a group of 2,400 supplied 1,824 directors for the *kolkhozes*, 290 board members, and 6 directors and 257 instructors of tractor stations.

All these measures proved insufficient, and in 1933 a terrible

famine crowned the first phase of the battle for agricultural collectivization:

"Therefore a new mobilization of Communists and technicians was carried out and the countryside was flooded with them. Each tractor station became an ideological fortress from which to penetrate and enlighten the brains of masses of peasants. In this way 50,000 tried Communists, 110,000 technicians and 1,900,000 drivers and mechanics went to the rescue, and succeeded, for the time being, in attaining their aims" (Henri Barbusse, p. 256).

This second wave of Communist invasion was not only much more powerful than the first, but it was more cleverly directed. The Communist leaders recalled those of the first 25,000 who had made themselves so hated, and the new trainers were organized in political sections or *politotdels*. All power was concentrated in these new bodies and they became the fundamental instrument of Bolshevik domination over the *kolkhozes*. Kaganovitch, himself President of such a *politotdel* in North Caucasia, gives us the following information about the campaign:

"Having drawn up a Leninist balance of the situation in the countryside, Comrade Stalin set the task of creating a new organization in the villages, the political sections; and sending tried and trusted men from the towns capable of performing the tasks set by the party. . . .

"More than 18,000 militants were sent into these political sections in the countryside. Fifty-eight per cent. of them were workers, and 35 per cent. of them had been members of the party since 1920 at least. Seventy-nine per cent. of the leaders of these political sections were members of the party prior to 1920. Forty-five per cent. of them had received higher general education or higher political instruction in the schools of the party" (Kaganovitch, p. 19).

By a decree issued on June 15th, 1933, the local Communist authorities already existing in the villages were subordinated to these *politotdels* and the latter were incidentally given full authority to dismiss the presidents and other officials of the *kolkhozes*, despite the fact that these latter were elected, according to the Statutes, in annual general meetings of the *kolkhoze* members. Very often the Presidents and members of the *politotdels* themselves took over the functions of the dismissed officials. These agents of the Communist Party carried out deportations, the confiscation of property and many executions. The Presidents of recalcitrant *kolkhozes* were driven out on a mass scale. The *Izvestia* of March 3rd, 1937, informs us:

"At one session of the Executive Committee of the Dikanka Region [Ukraine] five presidents of *kolkhozes* were dismissed. . . . The Executive Committee of Tobolsk dismissed twenty-nine presidents of *kolkhozes*."

Thus the election of officials in the *kolkhozes* is seen to be the same comedy as elections in the unions, and in many cases appearances are not bothered about at all. The *Pravda* of September 18th, 1946, writes in connection with a purge:

"In most of the *kolkhozes* the officials are appointed and not elected. In some districts there have been no elections for years."

The task of the *politotdels* was also to reorganize an agricultural system suffering from collapse. They had to persuade the peasants to let themselves be collectivized, exhort them to produce more, teach them to drive tractors, introduce Socialist competition, track down and destroy all traces of passive resistance, and, above all, see to it that the sowing plans and the delivery of wheat to the State were carried out to the letter. In default of technical ability, the *politotdels* carried out these tasks by means of terror and repression. Luciani tells us that "they gave food only to those peasants who had fulfilled their daily tasks" (Luciani, p. 141). The methods applied revealed not the slightest trace of creative imagination. They were the same old methods used in all the slave States of the world from the dawn of history. "Eternal insolence of human nature," writes François Guizot. "The only experience men have acquired is that of their own weakness, and they take advantage of it as of an advance in the science of power."

A first slackening of the Communist grip on the *kolkhozes* was visible in the decree of May 22nd, 1940, which authorized peasants to build their own houses on their own plots. And on March 10th, 1941, the Council of People's Commissars gave them the right to let such houses with the parcel of land adjoining them. With the outbreak of war, however, the "thaw" set in rapidly, and the economic life of the *kolkhozes* began to take on almost the appearance of a new N.E.P. In practice and without any formal legal authorization, the members of the *kolkhozes* were allowed tacitly to sell freely what they produced on their own plots. But in exchange for that largesse a decree issued on April 13th, 1942, raised the minimum day's work required of collectivized peasants by 20 per cent. However, that increase of the labour due to the State was accepted by the peasants with a light heart, in view of the possibility of growing something for themselves again.

The new free market in food which opened up on the streets, at railway stations and along the lines of march proved very profitable, thanks largely to the permanent financial well-being of the higher officials of the State, and the circumstantial prosperity of "shock workers" and war profiteers—who exist and prosper in such circumstances under all régimes. Within the space of a year or so individual peasant plots flourished like veritable gardens of Eden amidst wide stretches of *kolkhoze* land hastily and primitively tilled without heart or will.

In passing let us note that this revival of agriculture on a "capitalist" basis, which assured the adequate feeding of the Soviet Union in its gravest hours and which could never have been obtained on the basis of bureaucratic collectivization, seriously discredits the Soviet economic system—and in consequence Socialism itself, if one insists on identifying the one with the other. In fact every time the situation became critical, as in 1922 and again in 1942, each time when it was a matter of life or death, the Bolshevik State managed to ensure its survival only by greatly relaxing the rigidity of its doctrines.

But once the threat which menaced the existence of his régime had been removed Stalin returned to his old ways. From the spring of 1946 a "pitiless" reaction set in against the timid re-appearance of the N.E.P. Woe to those naïve unfortunates who believed themselves authorized by the Soviet Government to bring a little ease to their hearths, even at the cost of that arduous labour which saved their country during the war. On March 7th, 1946, the Soviet Press published a long report by Andreiev, who is, as we have seen, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, denouncing "the new *kulaks*." Andreiev reports 2,225,000 cases of illegal land appropriation (on an average twelve cases per *kolkhoze*) involving no less than 4,700,000 hectares.¹ The "millionaire peasants" are taken to task in a tone at once mawkish and sinister, indicating that the famous Soviet steam-roller is about to go into action again. And in a trice the old system of repression—conducted, not by peasant authorities, but by the Communist Party—reappeared with all the old hateful features of the years of compulsory collectivization. Andreiev himself was made President of a new "Special Council for *Kolkhoze* Affairs" attached to the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, and his first move was to rally the old *politotdels*, to purge them of doubtful elements, and to send them into action once again against the peasants with the assistance of a new levy of Communist activists and propagandists from the towns.

On September 19th, 1946, an important decree of the Central Committee of the party was issued "to repress abuses in the *kolkhozes*." The maximum area of individual plots tilled by peasants was limited to 50 ares,² and such plots were made non-transferable under pain of draconic punishments. At the same time the freedom of sale for rural products was also greatly limited and prices were fixed. And finally "a reorganization of cadres in the countryside" was ordered. Once again the outlook for the peasants in Soviet Russia became gloomy in the extreme. The Plenum of the party in February, 1947, was given the welcome information that Andreiev had been busy in his new job. No less than 600,000

¹ A hectare is 2.47 acres.—*Tr.*

² About 1.2 acres.—*Tr.*

peasants and *kolkhoze* members had been expelled—that is to say, in practice sent to their deaths, and only 28 per cent. of the presidents of the *kolkhozes* prior to 1945 still held their posts. Incidentally, what becomes of the “Democratic Statutes” which ensure the *kolkhoze* members the right to elect their own leaders?

However, this new wave of Communist terror throughout the countryside did not save the Soviet Union from skirting the borders of famine, so the Plenum adopted a series of “historic decisions” which subsequently filled many columns in the Soviet Press, introducing certain reforms with a view to solving once again the insoluble problem: how to increase the efficiency of the *kolkhozes* without at the same time ruthlessly applying the axe to their enforced bureaucratic structure.

These reforms introduced the system of payment prevailing in the factories (piece-work and bonuses) into agriculture (the old standard of “a day’s work” becoming variable according to circumstances and yield), and sub-divided the *kolkhozes* into cells. In the future, each such cell was to be responsible for the land or cattle allotted to it; to account for its stewardship; and at the same time to enjoy the benefits accruing from it. The peasants, subject to the same laws which tie the worker to his factory, are henceforth equally tied to their cell for ever. In this way the *moujik* returns to his old bondage in a new form. He finds himself an unwilling member of a group whose leader is a creature of the central power and at the same time the sole judge of the “yield” of his labour, and who is thus the arbiter of his personal fate.

Was it to embellish these new chains that a decree issued on April 1st (significant date), 1947, extended the distribution of medals and decorations, previously reserved for workers, officials and soldiers, to the peasants? Let us note in passing that in making this concession the bureaucratic power has not failed to take into account the gulf separating a simple peasant from his leader: the most honorific title, that of “Hero of Socialist Labour,” is reserved for the exclusive use of presidents and officials of *kolkhozes*.

Such is the structure and such are the powers of the party which dominates all the Russias. As far as the principles and the programme which occupy so much space in its statutes are concerned, we do not propose to devote a single line to them. It is a rare thing that an oppositional party has the statutes of its policy; it is quite unknown that a party in power carries out the policy of its statutes. The true doctrine of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union will easily be visible from the present book, which is full of its works. For the rest, in confining ourselves to dealing with its works rather than with its professions, we are following the counsels of Marxism: we are ignoring the superstructure of words for the infrastructure of facts.

THE LEADER

WHAT FOLLOWS IS NOT a fairy story and not a tale of ancient Egypt. After exactly 2,290 years the long line of Pharaohs, which history thought had ended with Nectanebo II, has come to life again. It has been re-born within a party which represented the culmination of a struggle waged over the same 2,290 years for the freedom of humanity from oppression. Abandon reason all ye who enter here.

1. *The Omnipotent Stalin*

The Constitution of November, 1936, "the greatest democratic document of all time," was granted to the Soviet people by the good will of Stalin. Marenko tells us so in an editorial published in the *Pravda* in December, 1936:

"What a delight to be able to divide the history of human civilization into two phases so clearly: before and after the Constitution bestowed on us by the great Stalin."

And it was the same great Stalin who two years later bestowed labour legislation on the Russian workers in direct and literal contradiction to the written word of this Constitution. The bestowals of the great Stalin violate each other mutually amidst the "totally enraptured exaltation" of the recipients.

Proofs of the omnipotence of Stalin will be found throughout this book, and therefore the few choice samples we quote here are put forward less for their inherent importance than for their picturesque and demonstrative value.

Here is Stalin in the role of film producer:

"Before a Soviet film is shown to the public, Choumiatski (the chief of our film industry) shows it first privately to Stalin. . . . He listens to Stalin's counsels, which are often orders, and then proceeds to make unexpected alterations. . . . Praise and blame descend in an inexplicable shower" (Barmine, p. 310).

Every formula used by Stalin, every phrase, every word, becomes a slogan at once. He concluded one of his speeches with the words: "We must now turn our faces to production." That was enough. For months on end, "We must now turn our faces to production" was printed on the front page of 10,000 newspapers and other publications throughout the Soviet Union. And one day, after all the other Bolshevik leaders, he made a discovery, "We Bolsheviks

must master technique," and after that streamers appeared everywhere containing the pregnant words: "We Bolsheviks must master technique." On another occasion he declared, "Technique decides everything," and the vast chorus immediately went up to high heaven everywhere: "Technique decides everything," although only just before the same chorus had been chanting rhapsodically: "Policy decides everything." On March 4th, 1935, at the passing out of students at the Military Academy, the Muscovite Mahomet declared: "We have the machines; what we now need above all is the men." The next day the *Pravda* said its piece:

"We are profoundly conscious of the immense importance of the new slogan of Comrade Stalin: 'The cadres decide everything.' We make a solemn promise to fight and to work in a fashion that will make us worthy of the care and affection of our great leader. Receive our warmest greetings, master of wisdom" (*Pravda*, May 7th, 1935).

Immediately afterwards 320 million ear-drums were blasted with a great shriek: "Man is our most precious capital." One year later Stalin put several million men of the Bolshevik élite to death, and at once 10,000 Soviet newspapers swung the censer in honour of this wholesale massacre of "our most precious capital."

Stalin prohibits voluntary abortion. Immediately the 10,000 put the spotlight on him as a good father of his family, publishing photos showing him with his son or embracing his mother, whom he had not even seen for years. And if he makes the simplest possible statement in the simplest possible language capable of no possible ambiguous interpretation, such as, "The Soviet Union, an agricultural country, is developing into an industrial country"—as so many countries have done before it—we find that the solemn pronouncement is immediately transformed into a profound and sacred thought and inscribed on hundreds of monuments, as visitors to the Soviet Pavilion at the International Exhibition in Paris in 1937 could see for themselves.

The régime does its utmost to see that no one escapes the obsession of Stalinist slogans.

"Each has to go through an examination destined to reveal the truth about his personality and the degree of his loyalty to the régime. Every hesitation and every interpretation considered insufficiently orthodox are carefully noted and can have disagreeable consequences. 'It is useless to attempt to say anything better on the subject than Comrade Stalin has already said. You should confine yourself to repeating exactly the contents of his discourse,' we were told. And the engineers present submitted with docility to the catechism, with which they were already well acquainted" (Miliero, p. 102).

Stalin not only has the power to put his slightest desire into

effect, but he also has the power to prevent the expression of the slightest desire to the contrary. Stalin himself proves amply that there is considerable opposition to his policy by the fact that from time to time he orders the execution of thousands of his opponents. At the same time it is impossible to discover the least sign in print, or in any other way, of the opinions for which these unfortunates are butchered. Neither Louis XIV nor Cromwell was ever able to prevent hundreds of oppositional pamphlets from being written and printed in garrets and sheds all over the place. Bonaparte, Metternich and Napoleon III, who were all considered the severest of tyrants, were caricatured, ridiculed and mocked at in song and pamphlet during their lives and in their own countries—why, even under their own windows—whilst illegal leaflets attacking them and their works appeared even in their own offices. But Stalin is absolutely taboo.

Negotiate a treaty, censor a film, bestow a Constitution, violate it shortly afterwards, fix production norms, double them, then triple them, collectivize 120 million people, suspend the collectivization, start it again, draw up an entirely new programme of education, decree new labour legislation, replace it by another, and then another, sign a pact with Hitler, people the wastes of Northern Siberia with banished men and women, depopulate the Crimea of its Tartar inhabitants, prohibit voluntary abortion, send one man to his death, or a 100, or 1,000, or 10,000, or give them all the Order of the Red Flag—these are only some of the things the great Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union can do indiscriminately, guided only by his own will.

Titles and names are frequently changed in the Soviet Union; why not Stalin's own? It is no longer suitable. Why not Nectanebo III, Pharaoh of All the Russias?

2. *The Legendary Stalin*

"A certain bashfulness prevents the great ones of this earth from praising themselves, but they always have a panegyrist or a poet in their pay to praise them as fulsomely as they desire." Erasmus, In Praise of Folly.

The deification of the Great Leader has reached such a stage in the Soviet Union that no one would be prepared to believe it without abundant proofs. If in reading the examples we offer here the reader suffers from a feeling of oppressive uniformity, we apologize and beg him to consider that he is only making the acquaintance of a very common trait of Soviet life in general.

It is hardly necessary to stress that this leadership cult is in flagrant contradiction to the philosophy of Socialism. The founders

of Socialist doctrine are in complete agreement with all their independent-spirited disciples on this fundamental Socialist principle: power must not be concentrated in the hands of an individual. Certain Marxists believe that a dictatorship of the proletariat controlling the State is necessary in the preliminary stages of revolution, but that does not prevent their violently opposing any pre-eminence on the part of an autocrat. In direct violation of this fundamental Socialist principle Soviet society has been governed by a leader since its inception. However, whilst exercising such dictatorial powers as he judged necessary during the civil war period, Lenin steadfastly refused to play the personal dictator and let himself be worshipped, flattered and canonized during his lifetime. Lenin's fiftieth birthday was celebrated in 1920 in strict privacy, but Stalin's fiftieth birthday in 1929 was celebrated with a pomp previously unheard of in the Soviet Union, and that was only a beginning. Since then the flattery heaped on the Comrade-Leader has taken on the character of a sacred mystery. Stalin has been made the object of a volume of publicity unparalleled in the history of the world, a publicity which exploits the eye, the ear and all the senses, the conscious and the unconscious of millions of men, women and children, and the ability, the imagination and the cunning of many thousands of propagandists—and the convincing force of the cruellest of all secret police.

His Court Poets

A Soviet publication devoted to the study of the exact sciences boldly twangs the Homeric lyre as follows:

*"Stalin is a powerful eagle
Who soars full of courage;
Stalin is the wisdom of the ages;
Stalin is the youth of the earth."*

Ekonomiticheskaya Dzhizn, November 28th, 1936.

The Caucasian poet Souliman Stalsky has discovered astronomical phenomena previously unsuspected:

*"Thou regardest the birth of day;
The stars of the morning Thy will obey;
Thy incomparable genius mounts to the heavens;
Thy profundity plumbs the bedrock of ocean."*

Pravda, November 27th, 1936.

In Daghestan a zealous poet searches for a fifth dimension for the hero of his song:

*"The mountain is high
Above the plain;
And the heavens
Are higher than the mountain.
But Thou, O Stalin, are more high
Than the highest places of the heavens.
Only Thy thoughts
Are even higher than Thee."
Nouvelles d'U.R.S.S., May, 1936.*

The Soviet poet Gauka-Koupola reveals sentiments in himself which arouse clinical misgivings:

*"To Thee, my master, all my desires,
My songs and my dreams,
And the beating of my heart."
Pravda, November 27th, 1936.*

And the *Pravda*, writing on August 28th, 1936, corrects a widespread misapprehension concerning the identity of the Author of Creation:

*"O Great Stalin, O Leader of the Peoples,
Thou who didst give birth to man,
Thou who didst make fertile the earth,
Thou who dost rejuvenate the Centuries,
Thou who givest blossom to the spring,
Thou who movest the chords of harmony;
Thou splendour of my spring, O Thou,
Sun reflected in a million hearts."*

Capital letters are the order of the day for all pronouns and attributes where Stalin is concerned, as for instance, "O Thou, Great Leader of the Peoples, O Master of our hearts," etc., etc., etc. The honorific titles, the humble circumlocutions, the servile phrases used by the subjects of Asiatic empires in the Middle Ages in addressing their despots have been greatly outdone in "the most democratic country in the world." The Byzantine Emperor was, after all, only Cæsar, Gothic, Allemanic, Frankish, Germanic, Vandalic, African, Pious, Happy, Illustrious, Victorious, Triumphal and Augustus. Such dignities appear feeble compared with the plethora of adulation showered on Stalin. But even the wildest flights of Oriental flattery are felt to be inadequate where Stalin is concerned, and the *Izvestia* of August 15th, 1936, sighs with regret:

"Writers no longer know with what they can compare you, and our poets have no longer sufficient pearls of language to describe you."

But Prokoviev turns even this paucity of flattering terms to good account in a supreme expedient of fawning sycophancy:

"Stalin, I say to the universe. Just Stalin, and I need say no more. Everything is included in that tremendous name. Everything: the party, the country, the town, love, immortality—everything" (*Journal Littéraire*, December, 1936).

However, that astute trick cannot serve indefinitely, and so the Soviet poets return to their old and faithful vomit, plagiarizing each other without modesty or measure.

But the rhymers hold no monopoly of dithyrambic flattery, and they have serious rivals to contend with amongst both the large and small fry of political life in the Soviet Union. When the new Constitution was promulgated, the journalists beat the poets by several lengths.

"This charter of human happiness and well-being formulated by the genius of Stalin, whose every article and paragraph is like a caress to the ear, is a torch held aloft over the world; it is a historic event such as humanity has never before known" (Alexis Tolstoy, *Izvestia*, November 24th, 1936).

The Orthodox Church had hardly found its way back to the Kremlin when the voices of its highest dignitaries were raised aloud in the universal chorus of "Alleluia!" Here is how the Metropolitan Nicolas de Krontitsi describes his interview with Stalin on April 10th, 1945:

"A prey to joyous emotion at the thought of being received by the greatest man of our contemporary epoch, great chief of a State with dozens of millions of subjects. . . . That meeting, that discussion, is obviously unforgettable. It was capable of inspiring any labour and any sacrifice for the good of our country, which has at its head he who forges its well-being and happiness, he whose glory rises over the entire world, our dear, our great Stalin."

The *Pravda* of October 16th, 1935, publishes a letter allegedly addressed to Stalin by the railwaymen of the Donetz Basin:

"To the driver of the locomotive of history, our deepest thanks for having sent us Kaganovitch who now faithfully guides our trains along the Stalinist rails towards final victory."

Useless to ask whether they might not do better on ordinary rails.

Four years later a special number of the *Pravda* devoted to the sixtieth birthday celebrations of Stalin on December 26th, 1939, declares:

"Stalin is the driver of the locomotive of history."

No doubt we shall find the formula in the *Pravda* again in 1949, 1959, and —. Unless by that time the locomotive has gone off the rails.

The *Izvestia* of August 8th, 1946, published a series of thanksgiving letters to Stalin, from which we extract the following choice

morsels: From an officer of the Red Army: "A feeling of pride fills our souls because we are contemporaries of Stalin." From a working woman: "Thank you Stalin because you live amongst us; you, the good, the wise, the simple, the powerful." And from a mother who has lost her three sons during the war: "You are for me a father and a child."

Five hundred and sixty thousand citizens sent the address to Stalin which follows here. That is to say, allegedly they sent it; in fact, it is doubtful whether they were consulted at all. The address was sent to the Kremlin by their Communist leader, who, no doubt, received it himself already prepared from the Kremlin:

"Your words show us the way ahead like the Pole Star. If the songs of our bards are capable of pleasing your ear, take them. If the sculptures and pictures of our artists are capable of rejoicing your eye, take them. If you have need of our lives to defend the country, take them. One desire alone fills our hearts: that our weak voices may penetrate to your ear. When we imagine that you, Stalin, will read these lines our muscles tauten with vigour, our heads lift proudly and our eyes sparkle with renewed life" (*Pravda*, June 24th-26th, 1935).

Are we in the Russia of the twentieth century or are we reading an ode addressed to Ben Stalin Suleiman from *The Thousand and One Nights*?

Here are a few more fragments all culled from the *Pravda* of different dates: "Master of wisdom" (May 7th, 1935); "Wisest man of our times" (November 25th, 1936); "Inspired guide of all the proletariat, Stalin the Great" (September 25th, 1935); "The greatest man of all times and all epochs" (February 2nd, 1934).

A wave of adulation analogous to that which rolled over the Soviet Union in 1936 at the time of the "bestowal" of the Constitution arose again in 1947 in connection with the celebration of the eight-hundredth anniversary of the foundation of Moscow. The affair was dexterously turned into a celebration of Stalin's greatness, genius, etc., for the good and sufficient reason that Stalin's presence honours the town.

In a message in connection with the celebrations, Vera Ibner wrote:

*"From the tower of the Kremlin,
Stalin, chief of all the peoples of the world,
Points the way for the whole universe."*

A speech delivered at the Seventh Congress of the Soviets by "an author" named Avdienko, broadcast by the Soviet wireless network and printed in full by the *Pravda* on February 1st, 1935 (and, of course, by all the other 9,999 newspapers of the Soviet Union), provides us with an example of pathological hysteria:

"Thank you, Stalin. Thank you because I am joyful. Thank you because I am well. Thank you . . . (etc.) No matter how old I become, I shall never forget how we received Stalin two days ago. Centuries will pass, and the generations still to come will regard us as the happiest of mortals, as the most fortunate of men, because we lived in the century of centuries, because we were privileged to see Stalin, our inspired leader. . . . Yes, and we regard ourselves as the happiest of mortals because we are the contemporaries of a man who never had an equal in world history. . . .

"The men of all ages will call on Thy name, which is strong, beautiful, wise and marvellous. Thy name is engraven on every factory, every machine, every place on the earth, and in the hearts of all men. . . .

"Every time I have found myself in His presence I have been subjugated by His strength, His charm, His grandeur. I have experienced a great desire to sing, to cry out, to shout with joy and happiness. And now see me—me!—on the same platform where the Great Stalin stood a year ago. In what country, in what part of the world could such a thing happen.

"I write books. I am an author. All thanks to Thee, O great educator, Stalin. . . . I love a young woman with a renewed love and I shall perpetuate myself in my children—all thanks to Thee, great educator, Stalin. . . . I shall be eternally happy and joyous, all thanks to Thee, great educator, Stalin. . . . Everything belongs to Thee, chief of our great country. . . . And when the woman I love presents me with a child the first word it shall utter will be: Stalin."

Such is the tragic intellectual, moral and biological abasement in which the Communists of the world feel no hesitation in collaborating. In July, 1935, the representatives of sixty-five foreign Communist Parties, domiciled in countries free from the Soviet Secret Police, and gathered together in Moscow, also sent their homage to the great man:

"We address ourselves to you, our leader, to you, the leader of the international proletariat and of all the oppressed all over the world. . . . In the struggle against the Trotskyite-Zinovievite counter-revolutionaries, in the struggle against the opportunists of both the Right and the Left, you, Comrade Stalin, upheld the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism. You have made them the basis of the new era of the world revolution, which will remain for all eternity the epoch of Stalin" (*Pravda*, July 26th, 1935).

After the reading of this devoted address, we are told that the delegates rose from their seats and sang the "Internationale," one verse of which reads: "We want no condescending saviour, no God, no Cæsar or Tribune. . . ."

The Icons Return

Not Hitler, or Mussolini, or the former Prince of Wales, or Charlie Chaplin, or the Dionne Quintuplets were ever photographed so often or had their photographs reproduced in such a persistent and overwhelming flood as Stalin. Even delegates and tourists as favourably disposed to the régime as Silbert, Bouré, Vildrac, Pons, Friedmann and others frankly admit they suffered too much of it:

"I have often seen the representation of Stalin in public parks and gardens cleverly devised from plants with different-coloured foliage. I have seen his photo in crèches and sanatoria, on steamers and on the sides of lorries taking peasants on an excursion, and I have even seen it in a clinic, incidentally an admirable one, where they looked after cretin children" (Friedmann, p. 217).

Cinema performances are constantly interrupted to show the picture of Stalin. At theatres groups of actors burst on to the stage in the middle of a piece to mime, dance, shout or recite the name of Stalin. When students and pupils open their notebooks they find inside the cover a portrait of Stalin. Stalin is on sale in the kiosks as a picture post-card; he can be bought in the shops as a vase, as a lamp, as a paper-knife, as a statue to be put up as a new form of icon wherever there is a corner. He is sculpted in stone and other materials; he is painted; he is represented in coloured lights; Young Pioneers, groups of sport girls, and even squadrons of aeroplanes form his name. The *Pravda* is very proud of all this, and on May 4th, 1935, it wrote:

"There are thousands of portraits, bas-reliefs and statues of the Leader. His name is repeated thousands of times, sometimes in metal, sometimes inscribed on gauze light and transparent as air, sometimes formed in chrysanthemums, roses and marguerites."

The philologists of the Soviet Union have worked overtime on the name of Stalin in order to produce the names of towns, rivers, provinces and mountains, and so we have Stalingrad, Stalinsk, Stalinogorsk, Stalinbad, Stalino, Stalinski, Stalinograd, Stalinsi, Stalinaoul, and so on and so on, and, no doubt, still more to come. An exhibition of "revolutionary relics" was organized in Batum, but all the "relics" had to have something to do with the life of Stalin. His bust has been set up on "Stalin Peak," the highest point in the Pamirs. It is interesting to note that Lenin's bust has to content itself with a secondary peak.

3. The Omniscient Stalin

"Stalin the Great" has passed and surpassed ("*dogmat i peregnat*," a phrase which has become almost compulsory in the Soviet Union) the omniscience of Leonardo da Vinci, Pascal, Archimedes

and all the celebrated artists and scholars of antiquity, the Renaissance and the eighteenth century, although in our own day even the greatest geniuses can do no more than master one field of knowledge. Who would dare to-day to pretend omniscience in any one science even, not to speak of several branches of human knowledge simultaneously? There is such a one. And who should it be but Stalin; Stalin the omniscient? Judge for yourself:

Music. Orpheus charmed only the trees of the field and the beasts of the plains. Stalin has charmed the Soviet composers. The *Izvestia* of February 27th, 1936, tells us:

"On the musical front we have three events of great importance to note. There is the discussion of Stalin and Molotov with Dzerzhinski, the composer of the opera, *The Peaceful Don*, and the two articles in the *Pravda*. If we rightly appreciate these three events, they will offer clear indications as to the path Soviet music should follow in the future."

And the proletarian musicians join in:

"In the light of the letter of Comrade Stalin new and great tasks arise on the musical front. Down with rotten liberalism in alliance with bourgeois resonance and the musical theories of the class enemy."

They insist on the necessity of "revising the canonization of past composers, beginning with Beethoven and Mussorgsky," and they declare that the Stalin letter "must make each Soviet orchestra a collective fighter for authentic Marxist-Leninism" (quoted by B. Souvarine, former Chief Editor of the French Communist *Humanité*).

History. Listen to what the *Pravda* of January 16th, 1946, prints with obvious relish:

"I am a professor of history and I never give a single lesson in which I do not closely follow the instructions of the Great Stalin, which are so brilliant and so full of profound wisdom in all that concerns history."

Exploration. The penguins of the North Pole felt the "General Line" pass through them, traced on the map by the hand of Stalin in person:

"When Tchatkin and his companions made their great non-stop flight from Moscow to the Far East in A.N.T.23, they followed 'the Stalin itinerary' traced on the map by Stalin in person. A film was made of the flight and shown throughout the Soviet Union with the title *Following the Stalin Itinerary*" (Friedmann, p. 215).

Cinema. In the *Pravda* of November 12th, 1935, a group of sycophantic film men exclaim rapturously:

"The apprenticeship which our masters of the cinema have served with Stalin has already borne marvellous fruit. Only the

powerful personality of Stalin, which embraces all the grandeur of the coming era of mankind, is capable of producing geniuses and talents in our day on all fields of culture and in all the branches of the fine arts."

In the future out-of-date cowboys, discharging revolvers from the saddle, will be replaced on the screen by juvenile leads with low brows and walrus moustaches discharging propaganda.

Agriculture. Fearing to be left behind in the general rush to praise Stalin's genius, twenty-one high officials of the Ministry of Agriculture spring into the breach in the *Pravda* of June 8th, 1935, to inform their comrades that his ideas on the subject "are a most precious and valuable indication for the study of pomology and the cultivation of fruits."

To leave no doubt whatever about the matter, and to include every possible phase of human activities on a wholesale scale, so to speak, a delegation of Soviet scientists informed the Eighth Soviet Congress that "science cannot flourish except under the direction of Stalin." Soviet artists not to be outdone by the scientists, declare that Stalin is "the sole source of inspiration." Writing ecstatically in the *Izvestia* on December 2nd, 1936, a Soviet comedienne long past the canonical age declares that she "feels no more than in her twenties since Stalin taught me to understand the meaning of life and art."

Front and Culture assures us that "fundamentally certain prognostications of Aristotle have been incarnated and explained in all their amplitude only by Stalin."

And another acolyte, swinging the thurible vigorously, declares bluntly: "Socrates and Stalin represent the peak of human intelligence."

Whilst the Soviet adult does his duty in devising endless litanies in praise of the great name of Stalin, it is the duty of the Soviet infant to learn them by heart and recite them on every possible occasion. On February 17th, 1934, a circular was issued by the Department for Primary and Secondary Schools attached to the Council of People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R. instructing all headmasters to incorporate at once in the curricula the decisions of the Congress and the report of Stalin:

"In all classes of both primary and secondary schools the basis of education must be the masterly report of Comrade Stalin. . . . In adapting it to the degree of development of his pupils, the master should describe the general atmosphere of the Congress, its perfect unanimity . . . and in conclusion the exceptional fervour shown by the Congress and by the party as a whole in proclaiming their deep attachment to their guide, Comrade Stalin. . . . The experience of the 'Radishev' School shows the exceptional importance of using a series of figures from this report in the mathematics

lessons according to the programme fixed for the fourth educational year. Comrade Stalin's report was also made the basis for teaching Russian composition as a classic example of composition and cultural discourse, and in order to introduce new words and new concepts into the vocabulary of the infants" (*Russie et Chrétienté*, No. 2, 1934).

And the *Izvestia* on April 27th reports approvingly that one school in the Donetz Basin studied the report of Stalin in connection with the physics lesson for the day, which was, "The expansion of liquids and gases in relation to temperature."

Clearly, gases have two properties in common with the speeches of Stalin: their expansion is infinite, and their density declines in inverse proportion to their volume.

4. *The Real Stalin*

"*I fear a one-book man.*" St. Thomas Aquinas.

His Intellectual Capacities

In view of the omniscience claimed so insistently in the Soviet Union for Stalin it appears desirable to take a look at the real intellectual capacities of the Soviet dictator.

In the intellectual sphere with which he is, after all, most familiar—that is, the sphere of Marxist ideology—Stalin can hardly be said to possess erudition. He talks about it constantly, but for anything he says at any time he would seem to have heard nothing about either the predecessors of the idea or about those who have subsequently developed it. Sir Thomas More, Campanella, Babeuf, Fourier, Saint-Simon, Proudhon as precursors, and Kautzky, Rosa Luxemburg, Jaurès as successors, are all strangers to his works. Similarly he seems to know nothing of the history of past revolutionary movements. The writings of "the Leader of the World Revolution" make little or no mention of the revolt of Spartacus, the German insurrection of Thomas Muenzer at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the revolutions of 1648 and 1688 in England, the revolution of 1772 in Sweden, the Great French Revolution, Chartism in England, the European revolutions of 1830 and 1848, the national insurrections of Kosciuszko in Poland and Garibaldi in Italy, the Paris Commune, the American War of Independence, the wars of liberation fought by Simon Bolivar in South America, etc., etc.

Apart from the works of Lenin, Stalin appears to have read nothing at all beyond one or two of the older writers, thinkers and poets of Russia, and from time to time he raises them to eminence in the Soviet Union. One quotation in one of his numerous discourses is sufficient to ensure the chosen one an

immediate and totalitarian reputation in the Soviet Union. Such was the case with Pushkin, previously hated and despised as an aristocratic poet. Thanks to a minor quotation by Stalin, he was raised to the pinnacle of Soviet renown from one day to the next as a "Friend of the People" and "a National Hero."

Lenin, of course, is quoted in season and out of season, and even fugitive thoughts and minor utterances suddenly appear to decorate the discourses and writings of the Master, very often when they have little or nothing to do with the matter in hand. In the *Pravda* of April 13th, 1937, Stalin appears to have thought that he had completely floored and extinguished an opponent by overwhelming him with no less than twenty-two separate quotations from Lenin. The fifty volumes which represent the collected works of Lenin are Stalin's essential intellectual pabulum, and if he ever quotes Marx or Engels it is never from the originals, but always indirectly from references in Lenin's works. However, he does not hesitate to alter the text of his "Bible" when it suits him in order to justify the particular policy of the moment. Thus, no congress ever takes a "unanimous and enthusiastic" decision, no "shock attack on the harvest front" is ever ordered, no "counter-revolutionary" is ever executed, except in faithful accordance with a paragraph from Lenin.

As to the style of both Stalin's speeches and articles, it is beyond all question monotonous, elementary and cumbrous. Generally speaking, the First Secretary of the Communist Party confines himself for hours on end to a recital of practical matters in connection with current policy delivered in an elementary-school style with innumerable repetitions. The ritual form of his speeches and articles undoubtedly derives from the Old Slav religious idiom in which he was educated at the Tiflis Seminary. The Great Leader always proceeds in the form of question and answer, as though he were reciting a catechism. The answers always consist in unproved affirmations of whatever is the subject of the preceding questions. There is never a profound thought or an original idea, never a cogent argument to carry conviction. And a very exceptional thing for a Russian politician is that the wit and humour is laboriously introduced as though dragged in by the hair, and calculated to make only the most servile of audiences titter.

"Look!" the novelist Babel exhorts us. "Look how he forges his style; see how each word takes shape! We must work to perfect our language like Stalin has done."

Well, let us look. We have taken a few typical examples from the work of this "pure stylist." Their heaviness, repetitiveness and often incoherence are visible even in translation. Uttering an inspired toast on May 17th, 1938, at a reception of Soviet higher education officials, he declares:

"To the progress of science, the science whose representatives understand the force and the significance of established scientific traditions and whilst utilizing them judiciously in the interests of science do not want to be the slaves of those traditions; to the science which has the audacity and the firm will to break the old traditions, norms and conceptions when they have grown out of date and become obstacles to the march of progress; to the science which knows how to create new traditions, new norms and new conceptions" (Stalin, VIII, p. 4).

And then the final flight of oratory:

"Are there any who do not know that in the course of their practical industrial activity Stakhanov and the Stakhanovites have overthrown as outworn the norms established by well-known scientists and technicians, establishing new norms in accordance with the exigencies of true science and true technique? I have spoken of science. But there is science and science. The science of which I have spoken is called advance-guard science. To the progress of our advance-guard science! To the health of the advance-guard scientists! Long live Lenin and Leninism!" (Stalin, VIII, p. 5).

The interminable and tiresome report delivered by Stalin to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party on March 10th, 1939, confirms at great length what we have already said about his oratorical capacities. In his sixtieth year Stalin re-discovered an old law which he proceeded to develop painfully before an assembly representing the leading experts of the Soviet Union:

"The economic power of industry is not measured by the volume of industrial production in general without taking population figures into account, but by the volume of industrial production considered in direct relation with the volume of consumption of that production per head of the population. The greater the average industrial production per head of the population the greater is the economic strength of the country; the lower is the average of production per head of the population, the less is the economic strength of the country and of its industry. In consequence, the greater is the population of a country and the greater are the needs of the country for consumption goods, the greater should be the volume of its industrial production," etc. (Stalin, IX, p. 20).

Previously Stalin had, in fact, deliberately compared the coal production of his own country, which has approximately 180 million inhabitants, with that of little Belgium.

On another occasion the Great Tribune of the People was exercised about "the formation of cadres":

"For that, comrades, we must have time. Yes, comrades, time. We must build new factories. We must forge new cadres for industry. But for that we need time and very much time. It is

impossible to overtake the principal capitalist countries from the economic point of view in two or three years. For that we need a little more time."

He then gave a third-form example, and proceeded with his refrain:

"In consequence, we need time, very much time, in order to overtake the principal capitalist countries from the economic point of view" (Stalin, IX, pp. 21-2).

It is interesting to recall that Stalin, who admits here the impossibility of economically overtaking the principal capitalist countries for the time being, has repeatedly asserted that, in fact, the Soviet Union had "passed and surpassed"—the United States!

Another fundamental characteristic of Stalin's articles and speeches is the superabundance of insults, abuse and hatred for his opponents. "All those Trotskyite, Piatakovite, Bucharinite and Rykovite degenerates" who "have seen themselves compelled to crawl back into their shells, and seek to hide their miserable programme" whilst "placing themselves at the service of foreign espionage organizations" (Stalin, IX, p. 37). After repeating this three or four times, as is his custom, Stalin continued his speech in his favourite form of question and answer:

"What is at the origin of this underestimation? [He is referring to the underestimation of 'the network of espionage established by the bourgeois states.'] At the origin of this underestimation is the fault of insufficient elaboration, the insufficiency of certain general theses of the Marxist doctrine of the State. That underestimation was able to spread in consequence of our unpardonable carelessness with regard to the problems of the theory of the State."

"Take an example from the style of Stalin" is the constant exhortation everywhere and in every sphere of life in the Soviet Union. May we be forgiven for imagining the effect on a couple of Soviet lovers true to "the General Line"?

"What is at the origin of your ignoring of my troubled and ardent glances, my precious?"

"At the origin of my ignoring of your troubled and ardent glances, my love, is the underestimation of your trouble and your ardour."

As always, a lack of cogency in the reasoning is made up by an excess of verbiage:

"Sometimes a campaign is waged against the Right-Wing deviation whilst at the same time the bridle is slackened on the Left-Wing deviation. . . . That is a concession to the Left-Wing deviation which is impermissible for members of the party. It is all the more impermissible because recently the Leftists have definitely placed themselves on the basis of the Rightists in a manner that

now makes the two indistinguishable. We have always said that the Leftists are really Rightists who mask their Right-Wing opportunism by Left-Wing phrases. Now the Leftists . . ." etc. (Stalin, II, p. 95).

Despite the heavy responsibilities the war placed on him and the brilliant associations it brought him, Stalin's intellectual calibre seems unchanged. In February, 1946, he caused his subjects to take part in a grand electoral display intended to dissipate the sceptical insinuations which were by then becoming widespread amongst the allies of the Soviet Union concerning the democratic purity of his authority and power. But instead the insinuations increased and multiplied, thanks to the unique electoral system which provides the electorate with only one candidate to vote for. Aware of the deplorable impression this system was producing, Stalin attempted to efface it as far as possible by pointing out that the candidate need not necessarily belong to the Communist Party. But immediately afterwards he got himself into a tangle and gave himself the lie:

"The only difference between them [the two sorts of candidate] is that some are members of the party and the others are not. But that difference is nothing but a formality" (Stalin, in a speech at the Bolshoi Opera House on February 8th, 1946).

As far as the construction, the ideas and the style of his post-war speeches are concerned, their level is as low as ever. The following are the conclusions Stalin thinks it necessary to draw from the war:

"The conclusions at which we arrive must perforce be true. But what are the results of the war? what are our conclusions? There is one general conclusion, and all others develop from it. The general result of the war proceeds from the fact that before having begun the war the enemy had lost it. . . . But that conclusion is too general, and we must not be satisfied to stop at that. . . . It is indubitable that to destroy an enemy in a conflict such as history had never before known means to have obtained the greatest victory in history" (Stalin, *ibid*).

And this is the man who disposes in complete sovereignty over approximately 190 millions of men, women and children.

Let us meet a possible objection at once by pointing out that we are well aware that weak and even feeble passages can be found in the writings of all men, even the greatest, and it would clearly be both unjust and foolish to attempt to judge their qualities on the basis of such passages. However, this objection does not apply to the present case, and we are in a position to assure the reader that the extracts we have given are not exceptionally weak or feeble as compared with the whole, but that, in fact, they are typical of Stalin's every speech and every article. The Soviet Academy provides us with a telling quotation which characterizes both

Stalin's style and the profundity of his thought. The fact that nothing better could be found indicates that it represents the height of Stalinist wisdom. At the head of the new Statutes of the Academy glows the following brilliant gem:

"A science without relation to practical life; what sort of a science is that?" (Stalin, in the *Izvestia* on November 24th, 1935).

His Political Procedure

The three stages of Stalin's normal attitude towards his adversaries are as follows: Denounce their programme; plagiarize it; and then exterminate its authors.

In April, 1927, at a plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Stalin ridiculed Trotsky's plea for industrialization by comparing it with a poor peasant spending his money on a gramophone instead of on a cow. He also virulently denounced Preobrazhensky, whom he accused of "wanting to obtain the initial capital for industrialization from a feudal exploitation of our peasantry." And on July 14th, 1928, Stalin again thundered against those who thought that the time had come to put an end to the private economic sector in the Soviet Union:

"These people have nothing at all in common with the line of our party. The real solution consists in stimulating small and medium agricultural operations whilst aiding them in every possible way to increase their harvests and their yields" (*Izvestia*, July 16th, 1928).

A few weeks later Stalin issued orders to liquidate all traces of the private economic sector in the Soviet Union, to force industrialization to the limit, and to build the Dnieperstroï—the gramophone *de luxe* of the Russian peasantry. The programme of the opposition which Stalin had previously denounced in the severest terms was now put into execution with a rod of iron, but with neither competence nor restraint. The industrial giants which arose as a result of this sudden "veer" were ten times bigger than the opposition had demanded. The new departures of the Great Leader are always initiated with brute force. "The extermination of the *kulaks* as a class" which he then ordered was carried out beyond the letter, and it has gone into history side by side with the bloodiest mass repression known to mankind. And if the Left-Wing Communists whose programme he had caricatured protested, he had them shot.

The procedure is always the same. When the abuses of "de-kulakization" became catastrophic, he began by reducing the Right-Wing Communists who were demanding "a relaxation of tempo" to silence; then he "relaxed the tempo" suddenly and without discernment; after that he shot those who had demanded the relaxation in the first place. When the alliance of the Communists with the Kuomintang, which had cost the Chinese Communist

Party so many lives, had to be broken, Stalin's abuse poured down on those who demanded the breach; then he made the breach himself at the worst possible moment by launching a *Putsch* in Canton, which only made the long list of Chinese Communist victims still longer, and turned on those whose counsel he had followed so tardily and so maladroitly.

The number of his doctrinal variations are limited only by the rarity of his doctrines. On three points he has expressed himself, not profoundly, it is true, but at least clearly. He upheld the right of the mixed populations annexed by the old Russian Empire to national autonomy; he denounced the League of Nations as "a league of brigands"; and he declared that universal direct and secret suffrage as practised in all democratic countries was nothing but "a petty-bourgeois prejudice." Very shortly after most vehemently proclaiming the right of national autonomy, he drowned the autonomous tendencies in the Ukraine and in Georgia, his own homeland, in blood. He gloried in his own entry into the League of Nations in 1935. And to-day he has nothing but praise for the universal, direct and secret suffrage which his new Constitution allegedly introduces into the Soviet Union.

"Never—no, truly, never—has the world seen elections as truly free and as truly democratic. History knows no other example" (Stalin, quoted by Basily, p. 458).

His Personal Character

The man who cannot make himself important by his own intrinsic worth seeks to enhance his estimate by outward show. He seeks to distinguish himself by the number of servants and officials who bar the way to his presence, and by the number of guards who surround his carriage. In place of the unpretentious superiority conferred by original thought or brilliant oratory, he creates an artificial superiority by arriving late at meetings, keeping other people waiting, and so on. Such methods come so naturally to Stalin that he equally naturally imputes them to other leaders. Listen to his own story of his first meeting with Lenin:

"I met Lenin for the first time in December, 1905, at a conference of Bolsheviks at Tammerfors in Finland. I hoped to behold the mountain eagle of our party as a great man; great not only politically, but, if you like, physically as well, for Lenin had the aspect of a giant in my imagination, well-built and imposing. Imagine my disillusion on seeing a most ordinary person, below middle height and with nothing, literally nothing, to distinguish him from other ordinary mortals. It is admitted that 'a great man' should arrive habitually late at meetings in order that those present should wait anxiously with beating hearts for his appearance, and that just before his entry there should be shouts of 'Silence! He is

coming!" That ceremony did not seem superfluous to me because it imposes and inspires esteem. Imagine my disillusion when I learned that Lenin had arrived before the rest of the conference, and that he was sitting somewhere unnoticed in a corner simply talking, the most ordinary talk, to the most ordinary delegates at the conference" (*Izvestia*, February 12th, 1924).

The mountain eagle enhances its prestige by its remote and elevated isolation and by its cruelty. It was no accident that Stalin took the mountain eagle as his symbol of a party leader, and that since then all those that swing the thurible before him have used it to describe him. The note of humour in this narration does not in the least weaken its demonstrative value. It is introduced merely to give the orator a little of that simple good nature he envied so much in Lenin, and of which he possesses so little himself. Possibly in his heart he reproaches Lenin for it, but he is well aware of its usefulness in the armoury of a "Socialist" dictator. Friedmann, the author of a book which represents, to our knowledge, one of those extremely rare Stalinist apologies which are amenable to reason at all, has raised the question of whether Stalin is not secretly annoyed by the obsequious cult which surrounds him:

"What is quite certain, at least, is that one of his famous '*Davolno*' (Enough!) would put a stop to the rising flood at once. He has not spoken that word" (Friedmann, p. 216).

The conclusion is obvious enough: no man can be deified during his own lifetime without his consent. By the cult with which he has deliberately surrounded himself, Stalin has made any defence impossible. If he demonstrates his simplicity, it is in order that his simplicity should be duly admired. When he receives audiences of Stakhanovites and peasants in the Kremlin, he does so in order to appear like Lenin, an extraordinary man capable of "conversing in the most ordinary fashion with the most ordinary people."

With age he has remained reserved, but his pose of modesty has disappeared. Ostentatious humility is confined to his garments, and even the choice of them is governed by his desire to propagate the traditions and patriotism of Russia. Two traits, however, are growing more and more striking in "the peasant of Gori": prudence and mistrust. Witnesses are unanimous in ascribing an extreme reserve to Stalin in both thoughts and words, a great calm in his bearing, and a circumspection which sometimes borders on irritating slowness. For his admirers it is a new proof of his genius; for his opponents it is further proof of his ignorance. In any case, it is a most valuable quality for an Asiatic politician able to rely on the servility of men and the permanence of institutions.

Henri Barbusse, one of the very few foreign Communists who have been admitted, if ever so little, to Stalin's intimacy, repeats for our benefit the words of a man he calls "clear and luminous":

"Healthy distrust is a good basis for collective work" (Barbusse, p. 313).

Let us add still a third quality: patience. And now we have the age-old trinity of peasant strength: prudence, distrust and patience; virtues as tenacious as the earth is treacherous, as grey as the earth is dull, as bitter as the earth is savage. They are the virtues which have permitted mankind to bend the soil to its service. Perfidious as Russia is complex, dull as Russia is uncultured, savage as Russia is immense. They are virtues which have permitted Stalin to bend Russia to his service.

Stalin possesses all the psychological corollaries of this fundamental trilogy. He is blessed with an extraordinarily practical nature. He is meticulous. He has perseverance. He is cold-blooded. His energy easily develops into cruelty. His cunning deliberately exploits inexactitudes.

On two occasions he gate-crashed conferences by means of false mandates. At the London Conference in 1907 the official Caucasian delegation formally protested against his presence on the ground that the Bartchalo district which he pretended to represent had no party organization at all.

In order to enhance his prestige, Stalin published the detailed contents of a letter he claimed to have received from Lenin during his first exile towards the end of 1907 in Siberia. Stalin was in Siberia for only a month, a length of time hardly sufficient to permit a correspondence with Western Europe, where Lenin was at the time, and, in addition, Stalin escaped *en route*, so that he had no address to which Lenin could possibly have written.

However, such private re-touchings of history are a mere bagatelle compared, say, with the following declaration hurled publicly in the face of the world:

"Germany did not attack France and Britain; France and Britain attacked Germany, and it is they who are responsible for the present war" (Stalin, in an official interview given to Tass and published by the *Pravda* in November, 1939).

Another characteristic trait of Stalin appears in the recital of the following incident by his old companion, Bibineichvilli:

"He is a calm man, immovable and above all 'implacable.' [This word is repeated several times.—S. L.] He is very severe in the matter of discipline and punctuality. At one of the meetings of the Committee he administered an implacable rebuke to a comrade who was late, concluding: 'You have no right to keep us waiting even if your own mother were dying.'"

On the eve of the November insurrection in 1917, Kameniev, Zinoviev, Riazanov and Rykov opposed Lenin's proposals, and Lenin declared: "Very well, we shall have to put them in prison if necessary." Thus encouraged, Stalin gave vent to his natural

instincts: "Or perhaps we'll shoot them," he added immediately. In his last book, published in 1944 after his assassination, Trotsky marshals a body of impressive presumptive evidence gathered throughout twenty years to charge Stalin with having poisoned Lenin.

"To choose a victim, meticulously prepare the coup, satisfy an implacable vengeance, and then go to bed; there is nothing more delightful in the world" (quoted by Souvarine, II, p. 446).

Stalin does not reveal himself completely in these words, since become famous, for there are various kinds of vengeance. In 1937 the whole world was able to observe the Stalin variety when he took a fierce pleasure in humiliating and dishonouring his victims before he slaughtered them. Even after their deaths Stalin was still obsessed by an insatiable desire to vilify them.

"The hand of Stalin does not tremble when he hands over the innocent bound hand and foot to the executioner, but it trembled, Rykov tells us, on the day the Right placed a triple resignation in his hands. Regarded as physically brave, the man has not a shred of moral courage. He is incapable of supporting even a friendly criticism or giving the floor to an opponent" (quoted by Souvarine, *ibid.*).

It is sufficient to compare the atmosphere in the Communist Party under Lenin's leadership with the atmosphere under Stalin's leadership to realize the abyss which exists between a political dictatorship based on a revolutionary programme, and a personal dictatorship inspired by a conservative ambition. Lenin permitted opposition, and although he desired to see the party line followed absolutely he knew that it could develop properly only after discussion within the party. It is sufficient to recall the fact that although Zinoviev had opposed the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in 1917, nevertheless Lenin subsequently entrusted him with the leadership of the Communist International; and that the Brest-Litovsk Peace was discussed for months at all stages of the party organization without those who opposed Lenin's views being victimized in any way. To-day, all that any Russian Communist need do is to betray the slightest misgiving about any of Stalin's orders, no matter how unimportant, and his fate is sealed: deportation or execution.

We do not propose to deal at any length with the controversial question of Stalin's historical antecedents. It is a dangerous sphere, and at any moment one can find oneself much too close to civilization: from Napoleon to Fouché, from Fouché to Peter the Great, from Peter the Great to Ivan the Terrible. We have suggested the Pharaohs, but we feel no assurance whatever that it may not speedily become necessary to wander still farther afield in the search for an adequate comparison. It seems less problematic and more

important for our understanding of the Soviet régime that we should do our best to reveal the link which joins the moral man to the political wirepuller. In this respect the historical precedent is clear at once: it is Machiavelli, whose system is the alpha and omega of Bolshevism.

One can often meet men blessed with quite considerable capacities and talents who nevertheless unreasonably believe themselves incapable and incompetent. They sink into timidity and seek refuge in pessimism. Their friends bemoan their lack of courage, and psychologists declare they are suffering from a mild form of "inferiority complex." On the other hand, there are men who know that they are incapable and incompetent, but who nevertheless ardently desire to play a leading role. They too nurse "an inferiority complex" complementary to the preceding, and it produces evil ferocity in their souls. It is this second form of the psychological malady which offers us the key to an understanding of Stalin's character.

Every man of worth knowing himself in possession of a margin of intellectual capital and reasonable possibilities of success is capable of brooking contradiction and recognizing and correcting his own errors. Stalin, however, is happy only when he is infallible. The only men he is prepared to tolerate around him are those who would never risk eclipsing him in anything. The others must keep their counsel or perish. Future historians will say that Stalin, modern Cain, "cut off the head of every man who dared to think." That was the inner meaning of one of the most important happenings in Soviet political life: the extermination of the Bolshevik Old Guard. Unlike the new recruits, the old comrades of Lenin knew Stalin apart from parades, congresses and official receptions prepared in advance in every detail by the Kremlin. They had thought, worked and fought for many, many years in the same party, often side by side with him, and one and all they were convinced of his personal mediocrity. They had thought, worked and fought for many, many years in the same party with Lenin, and they were in a position to make comparisons between the two leaders of the Communist Party. A bitter and cruel comparison for Stalin.

But there was an even more serious and dangerous factor than this. Every one of these Old Bolsheviks, now below him in the hierarchy, was convinced beyond doubt of his own intellectual superiority to the all-powerful General Secretary of the party. Every one of them was perfectly aware that he had come to power above their heads, not by his talents as a theoretician or statesman, but as a result of the play of circumstances, by arrangements, nominations, gerrymandered majorities, and so on. After imprisonments and deportations, men like Bucharin, Sokolnikov, Piatakov,

Mouralov, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Rakovski were compelled to bend the knee with the rest, abjure their "errors" and loudly recognize the infallibility of Stalin. But even when they were mere shadows of their former selves, they were still witnesses—silent witnesses. When they were amongst themselves, well aware of their own pasts and their own competence, they could not but revenge themselves as well as they were able in contemptuous references to "the inspired Father of the Peoples." Stalin was in no doubt about it. He would neither tolerate nor pardon it.

He waited patiently for his opportunity, as he had always known how to wait.

The time came and the knell of the whole generation of surviving leaders of the November Revolution sounded.

Stalin ruthlessly slaughtered all those whose mute presence cast a shadow on his glory.

His Private Life

Unlike the majority of his subjects, Stalin suffers from no shortage of food. He writes with an efficient fountain pen, and if he has a headache, authentic tablets of aspirin or the like are at his disposal. Everyone has heard references to his "private villas" in Gagry, Sotchi, Sukhum, etc. At Sotchi it is Villa No. 7 of the Central Executive Committee, situated at the summit of a wooded mountain. Stalin has cars and chauffeurs, telephones, secretaries and private doctors.

For many of his admirers such statements are mere vulgar calumnies, intolerable blots on their cherished picture of a simple and modest leader. But in reality we are not imputing a life of luxury to him; all we are saying is that he enjoys the ordinary privileges of power. Is that so scandalously at variance with the Old Bolshevik demand for equality of treatment between the highest officials of the party and simple workers? The question is not very important, because even if Stalin disdained the material advantages normally attaching to his functions, he would nevertheless still control the whole of the Soviet Union, its fields and its factories, its creatures and its souls.

The private life of the great often evades the light of historical analysis to the benefit of fairy stories and psychological speculations. Spectacular traits, seen alone, invite hazardous deductions: luxury is satanic; sobriety is angelic. However, there have been princes who lived in luxury and were nevertheless humane, just as there have been ascetics who brought their country to ruin and misery. The private life of an individual does not interest the sociologist except in its relations with public life. Is Stalin a sober manager of the efforts and lives of his subjects? This whole book gives the answer. Is Stalin really as beloved as the cult devoted to him would

have the world believe? Is it easy to approach him, or is he closely guarded? Would an attack on his person be possible? These are things it is important to know.

The evidence of all witnesses unanimously goes to show that Stalin has not a single friend, not a single confidant. All the ovations which thunder up to him on his appearance are the result of propaganda, fear or self-interest. He appears in public only very rarely, at the traditional reviews on the Red Square in Moscow on May 1st and November 7th, at certain special sessions of leading political bodies, and at the rare congresses of the party. Up to 1939 the only foreign ambassador who had ever been given an opportunity of talking to him was William Bullitt of the United States; and of all the foreign statesmen who come to Russia he receives only those who come specially to Moscow on highly important missions, such as Davies, Laval, Eden, and, of course, Ribbentrop. In recent years his isolation has not been quite so absolute, but that was due to the increasing danger which threatened from abroad.

On his rare public appearances he is always accompanied by an abnormally large number of associates, meticulously screened and unarmed. In the magnitude of the precautions which surround the new "Father of the Peoples" the Soviet Secret Police has greatly outdone its teacher, the Czarist Ochrana. Krivitzky, a high official of the G.P.U., as it then was, tells us that he received his pass for the May Day celebrations only late the evening before, brought to him by a special agent of the G.P.U. entrusted with the protection of Stalin:

"On the morning of May 1st I started early for the Red Square, and was stopped at least ten times by patrols who examined not only my ticket, but my papers. . . . The entire personnel of several sections of the G.P.U. had been mobilized there in civilian clothes as 'observers' of the parade. They had been there occupying every alternate row since six o'clock in the morning" (Krivitzky, p. 250).

Cruz Goyenola confirms that such extreme precautionary measures were still in force in 1944:

"It was absolutely forbidden for people in the houses in the neighbourhood of the Red Square to set foot on the street or on the balconies, or even to open the windows. At the Hotel National, situated about a hundred yards from the Red Square, where many of us diplomats lived, we were subject to the same restrictions, including the prohibition against opening windows. Even further: during the course of the procession we were forbidden to go from one room to the other!" (Goyenola, p. 105).

When he went to the Sovnarkom (Council of People's Commissars) to take up a high post, Kravchenko made first-hand acquaintance with the system of precautions in vogue there. When a high

official informs the Secret Police guard that he is prepared to receive a visitor, he has to give the guard his special password, known only to him and the Secret Police ("Lena, No. 17" was Kravchenko's password). After that the visitor is subjected to four successive searches.

"In our organization, as in the Kremlin, the Central Committee of the party and a few other places, a system known as *shakhmakti* (chessboard)—was in vogue. Its purpose was to checkmate any plot by treacherous guards to smuggle an assassin, spy or diversionist into the premises. This is how it worked: at irregular intervals, sometimes ten minutes, sometimes longer apart, the N.K.V.D. guards were shifted like pawns on a chessboard. They were moved without warning and according to an intricate pattern by a signal from a central control point. No guard could therefore know precisely where he would be stationed at a given time. . . . As an additional precaution, only the automobiles of the chiefs of the Sovnarkom could drive through its gates. . . . Even People's Commissars had to park their cars outside the gates. The danger that someone might blow up our holy of holies by planting a time-bomb in a motor-car was thus obviated" (Kravchenko, pp. 394-5).

Barmine is certainly an expert witness in such matters. He gives us the following additional details:

"Certain traffic arteries have been freed of all adjacent obstructions for better surveillance—for instance, the roads leading from the centre of the town to Mozhaïsk, Vosdvïjenka and Arbat. Those, in short, through which Stalin's car has to pass when he returns from visits to the Kremlin to his residence at Borovikhi. . . . The Mozhaïsk road, used by Stalin, had hardly been completed at enormous expense, when it was again widened from about nine yards to almost eighteen. . . . Beyond the circle of villas the old roads of the Empire begin again" (Barmine, pp. 375 *et seq.*).

There is no doubt that Stalin's motives in demanding straight and clear roads for his car to traverse have little to do with any excessive desire for travelling comfort, and a lot to do with the fact that it is easier to locate a bomb trap, or a terrorist lying in wait, on a straight road without cover.

If such precautions, pushed to the point of interfering with normal urban life, are not sufficient to discourage a prospective Brutus, then Stalin still has a revolting and very effective weapon in his armoury—a weapon which even the worst of the Cæsars despised: the implacable law of hostages. A terrorist would not risk merely his own life, but the lives of all those near and dear to him. The hatred of the tyrant is garrotted at the start by an infamous piece of blackmail, whose strength is drawn from the love of innocents.

For many people the retired life which Stalin leads is proof of

a praiseworthy contempt for noisy adulation. Unfortunately, this interpretation is irreconcilable with the adoration which Stalin deliberately demands of all his subjects. The real explanation of the contrast seems obvious enough. It is not that Stalin desires to live unnoticed, but that he is anxious to mask his real personality. In short, it is not modesty, but prudence. If he is unable to electrify the masses by brilliant oratory, it is because his inherent and unalterable language is dull and his posture clumsy. If he avoids diplomatic receptions it is because his lack of culture would jar with his surroundings. When Stalin the real appears, Stalin the god crumbles. But if he surrounds himself with walls and holds himself aloof from men, then not only will that reality remain unknown, but it will transform itself into a legend.

The power of a Mussolini could stand the light of day and seek to justify itself in personal prestige. Thus the transports his appearance produced, as corrupt as they were, were nevertheless attached to an appreciation of worth. And in combining the mystique of inner genius with the force of the word, the mystery of Berchtesgaden with the bombastic flourish of public action, Hitler exploited all the hidden springs of a political pathology rather more primitive in nature. But in the degeneration of the dictators, the lowest level has been reached in Moscow. The source of Stalin's myth is nothing but the old Asiatic magic of the veiled place. The first condition of his glory is the time-honoured palace secret. It would decompose in the fresh air; it is preserved and exalted by isolation from the world of men.

Once again we meet with Pharaoh Nectanebo III under the guise of Stalin.

5. Stalin's Rise to Power

"Despotic government establishes itself almost on its own. As all it requires is passions, all the world is good for that." Montesquieu, Cahiers.

The confrontation of the intellectual mediocrity of a dictator with the immensity of his power arouses such astonishment that the authenticity of the facts is likely to be suspected in defiance of all evidence.

The prejudice which attributes great talents and capacity to the great in vast domains is very tenacious. In reality it is only the conquest of power in the first place which demands particular qualities and has any claim to the dignity attaching to the performance of difficult tasks, but here, too, Stalin's escutcheon is blank. During the actual revolution Stalin was merely an obscure participant. His throne was set up in a building erected by others.

The only ability Stalin possesses is that requisite to maintain

himself in power. But dictatorial power is the resort of the weak. Compared with the fund of talents and subtlety required for permanent government in truly democratic countries, dictatorship represents a mode of governance both easy and lazy. It is well suited to mediocrities.

From Professional Revolutionary to General Secretary

Joseph Vissarionovitch Djugashvili, known as Stalin, was born at Gori in Georgia in the year 1879.

From father to son, the Djugashvilis had always plied the honest trade of shoemakers whilst remaining attached to the land. Stalin, as we shall continue to call him, was eleven years old when his father died. He was the only surviving son. Three other children had died before he was born.

Soso, a Georgian diminutive of Stalin's Christian name Joseph, received the first rudimentary education at a religious school in Gori, his mother, Katherine, wishing him to become a priest. In the year 1893, at the age of fourteen, Soso entered the Seminary at Tiflis. It was here, in contact with the other students, that he first came into contact with revolutionary ideas. In 1898 Katherine Djugashvili withdrew her son from the Seminary for reasons of health, and a few years later we find him as Stalin, a "professional revolutionary" of the Leninist school.

This term has often been wrongly used to describe conspirators living on the social difficulties and troubles of a country and paid "so much" per successful revolution. Lenin's idea of professional revolutionaries was, on the contrary, an élite, who—

"... not only devoted their free evenings to the revolutionary cause, but their whole lives. . . . They are militants having passed through their apprenticeship in the struggle against the police, and therefore capable of evading their clutches. . . . They are revolutionaries by profession who live at the cost of the party and can, at will, disappear in the illegality for clandestine work, change their locality at will, and so on" (Lenin, *Iskra*, No. 1, Munich, 1900).

All modern political parties of any importance are obliged to maintain a paid staff of officials. Under the direction of Lenin, these paid officials of the Bolshevik Party developed specifically Bolshevik traits in their political activities: extremism, sectarianism, authoritarianism, Machiavellianism and a certain arrogant pride based on the certainty that they represented the élite of the Socialist movement. These traits combined with those which derived from the Czarist régime: the illegality strictly confined subversive activity to small circles of cognoscenti where the seed of Byzantine disputes found a favourable soil.

Together with these defects, all more or less inevitable in the

circumstances, the old Bolshevik professional revolutionaries also had certain incontestable virtues: courage, firmness and an indifference to material advantage.

These qualities must also be granted to Stalin himself, who received two terms of imprisonment, was deported six times, and escaped five times. The November Revolution in 1917 released him from his sixth term of exile. In Stalin, unfortunately, the defects of the professional revolutionary were developed in the extreme. We have already mentioned the expulsion he suffered in 1901 on account of his intrigues against the leading comrades of the Socialist movement in Tiflis, and we have also seen that he did not hesitate to push his revolutionary amorality even to the lengths of falsification and denunciation. He was often more cruel than authoritarian. Even in exile, where all other revolutionaries established particularly fraternal relations with each other, he was unable, or unwilling, to make a single friend.

From that epoch it is evident that the intellectual vigour so outstanding in his companions in the struggle was no part of Stalin's make-up. He took no share in any theoretical work, he published no political theses, and he never wrote about or took part in any of the discussions on the fundamental problems which passionately interested leading Bolsheviks at the time. On the other hand, he took an active part in operations of a particularly risky nature: the disposal of counterfeit notes, "expropriations" by armed violence for the purpose of replenishing the party funds (the best known of these exploits was organized by him in Tiflis in 1907), the distribution of illegal literature, attacks on prisons, and so on. This activity, exclusively but brilliantly practical, won him recognition from Lenin, who "co-opted" him on to the Central Committee of the party in 1912. Incidentally, this "co-option" was a typically Bolshevik operation: seven leaders of the party gathered together in a café in Prague appointed a man to a leading position in Russian politics; no one else was consulted in the matter.

The theoretical immaturity and clumsiness of Stalin were blatantly demonstrated as soon as the March Revolution of 1917 placed him in the spotlight of public life. On one occasion, in the absence of the real leaders of the party and with the assistance of Kamenev and Muralov, who had returned from exile with him, he seized control of the *Pravda*, the official organ of the Bolsheviks, and propagated a purely "defensist" political line. His superficial intellect was unable to cope with the rigours of pure theory as presented in the "defeatist internationalist" standpoint developed by Lenin. Shliapnikov's memoirs describe the incident as follows:

"March 15th. The issue of the *Pravda* caused stupefaction amongst the supporters of our party in the factories, and satisfied sarcasm

amongst our enemies. Inquiries flooded in to the Petrograd Committee, to the Central Committee and to the editorial offices of the *Pravda*. The comrades wanted to know why our paper had abandoned the Bolshevik line to propagate a defensist policy. But the Petrograd Committee, like all other party organizations, had been taken by surprise by this *coup d'état*. There was much indignation in the workers' quarters, and when it was learned that three former members of the editorial board just returned from Siberia had seized control of the paper there was a demand for their expulsion from the party" (quoted by Souvarine, II).

After that unfortunate incursion into the sphere of political leadership, Stalin quite gladly resumed the practical activity to which he was so much better suited when Lenin returned from Switzerland and took over the leadership of the party. Throughout the revolution Stalin remained in the shadow of Lenin, who valued him as a determined and combative lieutenant, meticulous in the carrying out of orders. It is incontrovertible that in these years of decision Stalin played only an obscure role in the movement. Anyone who doubts it can verify the fact for himself. The name of Stalin can hardly ever be found in the Communist newspapers and publications in the years 1917 to 1922, whilst the names of Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bucharin, Kamenev, Rakovski and other well-known Old Bolsheviks figure on almost every page. Stalin owes the fact that he nevertheless remained a member of the Political Bureau and of the Revolutionary Committee of the Party entirely to his services to Lenin throughout this period. Sent on missions to the armies in the field on a number of occasions, he was never able to save the situation except in the domain of civil affairs behind the lines, when all that was necessary was an energetic police policy. His interventions on the strictly military field were invariably a failure, and in some cases, notably on the Tsaritsyn front, almost catastrophic. Lenin had to recall him hurriedly on receipt of a categorical telegram of warning from Trotsky. From the despatch of that telegram dates one of the greatest hates in history.

Stalin was more in place in the offices of the "Centre," first in Petrograd and then in Moscow, where he learned the work of governing under the watchful eye of Lenin. He accumulated offices and titles: Commissar for Nationalities; head of the "Workers and Peasants Inspection," created at his own instance to parallel the unions with a controlling body of officials; member of the Revolutionary War Committee; member of the Political Bureau; member of the Organizational Bureau, also created at his suggestion in order to relieve the Political Bureau of purely administrative tasks; and, finally, in March, 1922, at the Second Congress of the Communist Party, General Secretary.

The Process of Usurpation in a Monolithic Party

March, 1922, was a decisive date in the rise of Joseph Vissarionovitch Stalin. The post assigned to him was considered by Lenin to be a minor cog in the general administrative machinery of the party, but in reality it was the key position to conquer power, which was entirely vested in the party machine. The five years of revolutionary miracles Stalin lived through—the miracle of the Revolution itself, which succeeded within a few days; the miracle of the Civil War, won by the Bolsheviks against a world of enemies; the miracle of survival from the famine; the miracle of subjugating the peasants; and the miracle of preserved Bolshevik unity—all combined to convince him that a small group of politically resolute men were capable of winning and holding power in any society. All that was necessary, he realized for that consummation was an efficient police system, a group of militant fanatics, and a ceaseless campaign of propaganda. A General Secretary patient and cunning could pull it off.

A fortuitous event came to support Stalin's administrative good fortune, and the combination of the two made the temptation to usurp all power in the party irresistible. A few weeks after the Eleventh Congress of the party arterio-sclerosis paralysed the thinker and organizer of the new society in Russia. The spirit of Lenin ceased to control the Communist Party. Stalin was very well placed to realize that Russia could have no pretensions to a democratic régime. The succession was open. There was a place for a dictator. Prudently, but without losing time, he set to work. Whilst the other Bolshevik leaders held forth brilliantly and put forward "irrefutable" arguments, Stalin remained in the background carefully thinking over ways and means to attain his end.

The methods which he employed were fundamentally quite simple. They derived naturally from the series of deliberate and chance factors which had led the Bolshevik Party to exclusive power in the country. Given this prime fact, the possession of a majority in the party meant being all-powerful in the country as well. In order to obtain this majority in a party based on strict military discipline all a capable General Secretary had to do was to get rid of recalcitrants before the voting, to appoint his own nominees to the bodies entrusted with drawing up the lists of candidates, to eliminate insufficiently docile officials by sending them on missions to places where they could no longer be awkward, to see that the party organs received editors devoted to his cause and prepared to censor the resolutions and other material of the opposition, and, finally, to vilify and calumniate all rivals, and establish a system of espionage to supervise those in his own camp—and to do all this with unscrupulous determination.

Stalin's success was all the more brilliant because when objections arose it was sufficient to appeal to the mystical entity, "The Party," in order to unleash a wave of enthusiasm and loyalty which guaranteed the immediate execution of his orders. Now, the concentration of all power in the hands of the party and the militarisation of inner party life were by no means inventions of Stalin, but the deliberate master-strokes of Bolshevism, persistently aimed at by Lenin and facilitated by the uncultured and backward nature of Russia. "Stalin will prepare more than one highly-spiced dish for the party," prophesied Lenin, but he omitted to mention that it was he, Lenin, who provided him with the ingredients. All Stalin had to do was to cook the dish and serve hot—piping hot.

When, at the beginning of 1923, after eight months of paralysis, Lenin returned to political life, he was startled at the "Stalinization" of the party and the State. In the two departments of Nationalities (the Georgian affair) and the Workers and Peasants Inspection, Stalin had made reckless use of police methods, and, observing the grossness of the men he had put into office, the incompetence of his creatures and the cruelty of his methods, Lenin was compelled to realize that the "spices" of his protégé had a distinct after-taste of poison. The last months of lucidity before his death were filled with bitterness, with contempt for the organization which had slipped out of his hands, with desperate appeals for self-criticism within the ranks of the party, for a real study of the problems of the day, and for a return to moral standards. He indignantly attacked the boastfulness and lying which had become a canker in the party apparatus, and wrote: "Matters with us are so depressing, so rotten. . . . We now have nothing but a bourgeois Czarist apparatus hardly influenced by Soviet ideas." He wrote and published several articles in which in hardly veiled terms he castigated the chauvinist and brutal conduct of Stalin in Georgia, and "the unspeakable administration" of Stalin's Workers and Peasants Inspection. Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, informs us that he was "preparing a bomb against Stalin" for use at the next party congress. As the result of an act of gross impertinence committed by Stalin towards Krupskaya, Lenin dictated a letter to his secretary breaking off all personal relations with the man. By one of those strange chances which so often favour usurpers—when the usurpers themselves have not already favoured them—Lenin was again struck down by his old malady shortly after having dictated this letter. This second attack ended in January, 1924, with his death. The letter was never delivered.

The only document in existence which gives us any indication of "the bomb" Lenin was preparing is the famous "Testament," which contains a series of observations on various leading members of the party:

"In becoming General Secretary, Comrade Stalin has concentrated immense power in his hands, and I am not convinced that he will always use it with sufficient prudence. . . . Stalin is too brutal, and this fault, quite supportable in the relations between us Communists, becomes intolerable in the function of a General Secretary. That is why I propose that the comrades should consider means to replace Stalin in this post, and to appoint someone in his place who in all respects distinguishes himself from Comrade Stalin. . . . That is to say, he should be more objective and more polished. . . . This circumstance might appear an unimportant matter, but I think that in order to save ourselves from a split, and in view of what I have previously written concerning the mutual relations between Stalin and Trotsky, it is not an unimportant matter at all, unless we call it an unimportant matter which might develop into one of decisive importance."

These damning lines, mingled with criticism, certainly more amicable, but equally well-founded, of other Bolshevik leaders, were prudently hushed up by the leading men of the party, including Trotsky. They all feared that the publication of such an authoritative judgment might well have the effect of diminishing the respect felt by the masses for their Bolshevik leaders. They all feared that the revelation of such internal criticisms within the Central Committee might endanger "Bolshevik unity," although in fact that unity was already a myth. It was a grave mistake on the part of Stalin's rivals and it greatly facilitated his victory over "The First Opposition."

"The First Opposition"

Numerous and highly respected Bolshevik leaders, including Preobrazhensky, Rakovski, Radek, Smirnov and Piatakov, protested in 1923 against the stifling hand the Central Committee had laid on the internal life of the party, against the encroachments of an incompetent bureaucracy, and against the consequent petrification of the party organization. However, the remedies they proposed suffered from the same fundamental weakness that Bolshevism in general owed to its monolithic principle. The only real solution of the trouble would have been a courageous leap into real democracy, including freedom of the Press, a diversity of political parties, and a democratically elected parliament. However, the opposition contented itself with half-measures which, whilst not sufficiently radical to arouse the enthusiasm of the masses, were quite enough to irritate and anger the masters of the party apparatus. For example, as a matter of party discipline, Trotsky, who placed himself at the head of the opposition, remained in solidarity with the whole policy against which he suddenly objected. During the

course of the civil war he himself had given a striking example of an authoritarian temperament using dictatorial methods, and it had aroused considerable resentment and distrust amongst all those who really believed in democratic methods: he had suppressed the libertarian movement of the Cronstadt sailors; proposed to militarize the unions (a proposal which was rejected owing to Lenin's objection); and expressed warm approval of the resolution of the Tenth Party Congress forbidding the formations of fraction within the party. He pushed to the point of absurdity the contradictions of a struggle animated fundamentally by the spirit of liberty, but appealing to it in the form of religious devotion to a party guilty of liberticide, and at the height of the discussion he emitted the enormity: "My party—right or wrong."

Such an idea might, in the last resort, be reasonably applied to a country or a family, because a man is not at liberty to choose either freely, but for any sane spirit party fidelity depends precisely on whether the sane spirit holds the action of the party to be right or wrong: right; it is my party; wrong; it is no longer my party. Nothing else makes sense. However, for Bolshevism "party interests" take precedence over reason. The party is an entity in itself "apart from and above us all." It is a notion incorporated in a bureau, a label, independent of all considered justification on the part of its members and conceivable only in the form of a block. If an individual or a circle successfully spins a web of intrigue within it then any protest is hamstrung from the start by the sacred rites of the party dogma. Its High Priest, Trotsky, was to learn that later to his cost.

After his accession to the Secretariat Stalin associated himself with two other Bolshevik leaders who, like himself, had been rather manhandled in the famous "Testament": Zinoviev and Kamenev, whom Lenin had sharply reminded of their opposition to the Bolshevik insurrection in November, 1917.

Establish alliances suited to each existing situation; borrow the ideas of his allies to cover up his own theoretical poverty; break the alliance without the least scruple once it had served its turn—this was the repeated procedure of Stalin until finally in 1930 he succeeded in establishing his own undisputed dictatorship.

When Trotsky flung his very considerable prestige into the scales in favour of "The First Opposition," the "Troika," Stalin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev, grew alarmed, and extended itself into a "Semiorka" by co-opting Kalinin, Tomsy, Rykov and Kuibichev. Behind the scenes this "Semiorka" demonstrated a complete contempt for official party discipline. It had its own budget, its own agents, its own inner-party bulletins, its own code and its own fractional discipline. An order sent out in code was quite sufficient to cause the pulping of rival pamphlets; to launch the same calumny on the

same day throughout the whole network of party offices; to postpone meetings until after a transfer of suspects, etc. In face of this implacable conspiracy, Trotsky lost himself in a maze of hesitations, Bolshevik scruples and theoretical justifications accessible only to the leading group, who did not care a button for them.

Towards the end of 1923, at a critical phase of the fight between the "Semiorka" and the opposition, Stalin was once again greatly assisted by a chance happening: Trotsky fell ill. At the Party Conference in January, 1924, the opposition had only three delegates out of a hundred. It suffered condemnation in terms which were still comradely, but very plain. A few days later Lenin died.

Stalin exploited the blow in order greatly to enhance the devotion of the masses towards the party. His acute sense of human weaknesses told him that the masses, prostrate before the corpse of a dead and gone dictator, would want nothing better than a new dictator to venerate. Stalin did his utmost to give the popular mourning the air of a crisis of collective mysticism. Trotsky had demanded the rejuvenation of the party by recruiting new strata of real workers from the factories. As usual, after first having decried the idea, Stalin took it up and carried it out in his own fashion—that is to say, immoderately and with the sole intention of increasing his own power. Within a few weeks the party officials devoted to his interests admitted no less than 250,000 workers, chosen from amongst the most obedient, the newest arrivals, and those most fanatically under the influence of the retrospective adoration of the leader of the revolution. This "Lenin Levy," as it was called, was the work of parvenus in an already domesticated party, and it grievously disappointed the hopes of the opposition by its servility to the powers that were.

At the Thirteenth Party Congress in 1924 Stalin exploited the recent mourning at Lenin's death to avoid once again the reading of the "Testament." One or two Olympian allusions permitted only the initiated to realize that the battle between the rival camps had not yet been resolved. In January, 1925, one year after the death of Lenin, a joint session of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the party repeated and intensified the condemnation of Trotsky. Taking Trotsky's book, *The Lessons of October* as a pretext, because it contained renewed criticisms of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the joint conference removed Trotsky from his post as People's Commissar for War, and adopted various decisions, of which the following were typical:

"4. To consider the party discussion at an end.

"5. To continue to develop the efforts of the party to explain fundamentally the anti-Bolshevik character of Trotskyism from 1903 to the publication of *The Lessons of October*; to charge the

Political Bureau to supply all the propaganda organs of the party with the necessary information and explanations on the subject; to insert explanations of the petty-bourgeois character of Trotskyism in the programme of political instruction; etc.

"6. To conduct side by side with the explanatory propaganda in the party and in the Communist Youth League, a widespread popular campaign of explanation of the deviations of Trotskyism."

The struggle between Stalin and the "First Opposition" ended in the complete triumph of the former and the reduction of "Trotskyism" to the rank of an infamous, "bourgeois," enemy of the Soviet régime.

Whilst easily mobilizing majorities at meetings of Russian party officials against Trotsky and his friends, the "Semioroka" now proceeded to domesticate the Communist International. To this end, Zinoviev, then its Chairman, launched a vast action in 1923 which became celebrated under the name of "The Bolshevization of the Sections of the Third International," and reached its peak in 1924 after the death of Lenin. The founders of the Communist Parties abroad were inclined on the whole to sympathize with the Russian opposition, thanks largely to the democratic and cultural traditions of Left-Wing Socialist movements in Western Europe. These men were expelled or deposed one after the other and replaced by "leaders" whose only intellectual and moral baggage was their complete docility and their faith in Moscow's rubber stamp.

In the organizational sphere the "local branches," whose basis was a territorial area and therefore favourable to the development of a critical spirit, were abolished in favour of "factory cells," more readily manageable by the central party apparatus. This double process of decapitation and atomization carried out in Communist parties all over the world resulted in a great decline of their membership and a deplorable lowering of their intellectual level. But "Moscow" was not very much disturbed at this, for after all its main aim was to detach the Communist Parties from their democratic and Socialist affiliations and traditions, and harness them instead to the service of the Russian Embassies or the foreign sections of the G.P.U. The Fifth Congress of the Communist International, which took place in July, 1924, approved and confirmed the "Bolshevization," and humbly laid the independence of non-Russian Communism at the feet of the "Semioroka." The transformation had succeeded completely.

In face of that deplorable and slavish submission the Russian opposition revealed the whole magnitude of its political blindness. It had thought it wise to bank on the proletarian card, and it had warmly applauded the abolition of the territorial form of organization and its replacement by "factory cells." Being unwilling to

diminish the authority of the Executive Committee of the Communist International—that is to say, in fact, of the Political Bureau of the Russian Communist Party—it had accepted the expulsion of its own supporters without a word of protest. Later on, when Trotsky saw himself the victim of still heavier and more shattering blows from Stalin, he was naïvely astonished to find that he could count on no support whatever from the non-Russian Communist Parties.

“Socialism in One Country Alone”

The victory of the “Semioroka” over “The First Opposition” was not due entirely to a clever manipulation of majorities at congresses. It represented a profound evolutionary trend in the Soviet régime. By 1923 Soviet Communism had grown heartily tired of the revolutionary ambitions which had demanded an almost super-human exertion of all its forces for five long years. The N.E.P. (New Economic Policy) introduced by Lenin had given a certain amount of freedom to private, or bourgeois, economic activity, and in consequence the danger of a peasant revolt had been obviated. By October, 1923, the last breaker of the international “red wave” had dashed itself to pieces in Germany. The Bolshevik bureaucrats had now no further ambition but to enjoy more or less in peace the power they had gained in Russia, which now represented the only tangible relic of all the revolutionary post-war struggles. By persisting in his international revolutionary Socialist demands, Trotsky kept alive the restless spirit of an epoch which was already at an end, and for the new Bolshevism he was therefore a nuisance.

In 1925 Stalin was clever enough to develop this new state of mind amongst the Russian Communists into a system. He proclaimed that it was possible to build up Socialism in Russia alone, despite the fact that capitalism still survived everywhere outside her frontiers. It was a statement in evident contradiction to all the teachings of Lenin on the point, and to all the theories of Marxism of whatever school, and Stalin, as was only to be expected, had absolutely nothing to offer by way of valid theoretical extenuation of his new line. However, this was of no great importance because, in fact, the new theory suited the new needs of the Soviet bureaucracy to a nicety: no democracy which would involve a difficult and tiresome justification of functions seized by violence, whereas it was much easier to hold them in the same way; no industrialization which would require new great financial and social efforts; and no more vague and heady internationalism. Keep what we have, where we have it and how we have it.

The word “Socialism” has no place in Stalinist guiding motives except as a reference to the origin of the Soviet bureaucracy and as an indication of its definite rupture with the old possessing

classes. As time goes on, "Socialism" for Stalin has less and less to do with the old ideals of popular liberty and well-being traditionally upheld by Socialism in Western Europe. "Socialism" for Stalin is merely a formal bow to a doctrine whose phraseology is still useful for exploiting past glories and nourishing present demagoguery. On the other hand, the rest of the phrase, "in one country alone," is essential, because it involves the permanence of the established Soviet Government and its final rupture with international and democratic aspirations in the rest of the world. With these qualifying words "Socialism" is relegated to the role of a secondary phenomenon of the Russian Revolution, whose final and sufficient aim is seen to be the accession to power of a Bolshevik bureaucracy. At the same time this bureaucracy in "a single Socialist country surrounded by Capitalism," finds this circumstance an admirable pretext for not proceeding to what, according to Marxist theory, is the next stage of development: "the withering away of the coercive apparatus of the State." Very little Socialist, very national, anti-capitalist, but still more anti-proletarian, this "Socialism in one country alone" is a faithful reflection of historic reality, and it expresses itself best of all in the person of Stalin himself.

"The Second (Left-Wing) Opposition"

However, Zinoviev and Kamenev found themselves unable to go the whole hog in this way. Their background was much more profound, and they still felt themselves bound to the historic programme of Marxism. In addition, they were beginning to find their alliance with the General Secretary increasingly uncomfortable; he had a disagreeable habit of taking all the clothes. A curious circumstance is worthy of note at this point: it was by his relative forbearance towards the vanquished Trotsky that Stalin first aroused the suspicion of his two associates in the original "Troika." Zinoviev assumed, not without reason, that it was deliberate policy on the part of a man who aimed at personal dictatorship; a saving bet on another horse. At the Fourteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in December, 1925, the "Troika" officially broke up when Zinoviev and Kamenev dared to accuse Stalin openly of abandoning Socialism. But they had screwed up their courage a bit too late. The classic work of preparing for majorities had already been successfully performed, and Stalin sat immovable with a rump Congress at his back. The bureaucrats holding the party mandates were moved to real enthusiasm when their patron enunciated his new theory of "Socialism in one country alone," for it confirmed them in the enjoyment of power and permitted them to cock a snook at all revolutionary dreams. In consequence, Zinoviev and Kamenev were crushed in their turn.

They then considered throwing in their lot with the "First Opposition," for they were now fellow sufferers in a minority, and after painful negotiations, the alliance was concluded in April, 1926, taking the name of "Oppositional Block." Its programme included all the essential demands of the "First Opposition": democratization, industrialization, planning, and now, naturally, the struggle against the new theory of "Socialism in one country alone" in favour of more courageous and vigorous support for the efforts of international revolutionaries in other countries.

The Secretariat permitted the N.E.P. to extend in practice to a re-establishment of small-scale capitalism, and it developed to an alarming extent so that in 1927 its share of the national income amounted to no less than 40 per cent. Trotsky believed that this tolerance was a secret encouragement of a complete restoration of capitalism. With his incorrigible impetuosity, he immediately denounced it as "a Thermidorian process."

In face of this attack from the "Left," it was only natural that Stalin should turn to the "Right" for support, whose leaders, Bucharin, Rykov and Tomski, were not in the least disturbed at the rapid development of the N.E.P. Through their theoretician, Bucharin, they had already launched the resounding slogan, highly popular amongst the peasants: "Enrich yourselves!" They willingly envisaged the gradual transformation of the Soviet Union into a progressive republic on a petty-bourgeois social basis under Communist political direction. The Right therefore gladly accepted the offer of the Stalin Party Secretariat for an alliance against the Left.

With the assistance of this second alliance, Stalin again succeeded in providing a cloak of political justification for the underground upheaval of changes, sanctions, rewards and punishments. The usual monotonous sequence of cleverly launched calumnies, cunningly usurped delegations, and patiently gerrymandered majorities, was organized under the pretext of faithfully following "the path of Lenin." Bucharin's aim was to avoid any rupture between the proletariat and the peasantry, to counterbalance the growth of the private economic sector merely by cautiously introduced methods of co-operation, and to see to it that foreign Communists did not lose touch with the mass organizations even where they were reformist. Stalin's aim was much simpler: it was simply and solely to safeguard and consolidate the power of his apparatus. His position was now much stronger and it permitted him to adopt direct action in the struggle against his rivals. The party apparatus was officially used against them; their meetings were wrecked, sometimes even to the extent of physically exterminating speakers and beating up supporters; and historical documents and contemporary texts were both deliberately falsified.

On its part the Opposition gave no indication of any effective progress either in its methods or in its ideology. Just as in the 1923-4 discussion, it confined its efforts to the narrow circle of Communist cognoscenti. It still made no demand for the extension of democracy to the masses, and all it asked for was secret voting within the party itself. The industrialization it demanded was not directed to any increased well-being for the masses of the people, but merely to a lowering of industrial prices to the exclusive benefit of the State. In flagrant contradiction to his own charge of "Thermidorianism," Trotsky insisted obstinately that "the proletarian character of the Soviet State" should not be doubted or called into question by his supporters. And in order to prevent doubt about this sacred myth developing amongst his foreign Communist supporters he limited their platform to criticisms concerning mere problems of tactics in relation to the German situation in October, 1923, the alliance with Raditch in Yugoslavia and with La Follette in the United States, the Anglo-Russian Committee, and so on.

A vigorous attack on the fundamental degeneration of the Russian Revolution under Stalin's leadership would have revived the ideal still deeply rooted in the hearts of many Communists, and might perhaps have aroused the masses of the Russian people themselves, but these scholastic disputes on tactical matters, extremely involved and going back sometimes for several years, were incomprehensible and therefore a matter of indifference to the masses, whilst they drove the more enlightened groups into an impasse and inevitably condemned them to internal dissensions and splits. The erratic and unsystematic criticisms put forward by Trotsky were imposed on the foreign oppositional groups by exactly the same bureaucratic methods—though on a smaller scale—which imposed the conservative policy of Stalin on the official sections of the Communist International outside Russia. However lacking that main nerve of all certain domination, money, the Russian Opposition had much less success with its foreign groups than the Communist International had with its sections. International Trotskyism quickly developed into a loose collection of innumerable rival sects, each deliriously denouncing the world and history, of which each pretended to be the élite and the aim.

Within the framework of exclusively Bolshevik methods and notions, which the Opposition was unwilling to break, Stalin and his powerful apparatus undoubtedly had the greater practical advantage. So after six months of intellectual—and often physical—brawling, the Oppositional Block was forced to sign a declaration on October 16th, 1926, in which it pleaded guilty "to indiscipline and fractionalism," disavowed certain of its members who had let themselves get too far ahead, and submitted in advance to the decisions of the Central Committee. Strengthened and made

supremely confident by this preliminary capitulation of the Opposition, the Central Committee met a few days later, removed Trotsky and Kamenev from the Political Bureau, and Zinoviev from the Chairmanship of the Communist International, expelled Smirnov from the party altogether, and condemned and punished a series of secondary oppositional lights.

The hypocritical declaration signed by the Opposition was nothing but a practical example of that Leninist amorality in politics which the Bolsheviks of all schools naïvely regard as the be-all and end-all of any "enlightened and unprejudiced" revolutionary policy. The Opposition continued the struggle which it had just agreed to abandon. In defiance of good sense, it ordered its expelled members to consider themselves as "a fraction" of a party which, according to its arguments, was nothing but a "cadaver" under Stalin's leadership, but which at the bottom of their hearts they still regarded as "apart from and above us all." This recantation and its subsequent violation did nothing but impute to the Opposition, even in unprejudiced eyes, unavowed designs and made it appear guilty of indiscipline hostile to the party as a whole.

During the course of 1927 Trotsky thought he had found a suitable stalking-horse in the disastrous China policy of the Stalin-Bucharin cartel. In order not to alarm Great Britain, whose good offices the Soviet Government happened to need badly at the time, the Chinese Communists had been ordered to ally themselves with the Kuomintang, and to avoid upsetting Chiang Kai-shek by any impetuous attempt to prod his national struggle into social revolution. In March, 1927, the Chinese Communists captured Shanghai, which had been in the hands of a reactionary General, but they were so convinced of the purely bourgeois spirit of Chiang Kai-shek that they refused to hand over the town to him, and they were finally persuaded to do so only by telegraphic orders from Moscow. After a second injunction from Moscow, they handed over their arms to the troops of Chiang Kai-shek. A few days later Chiang Kai-shek carried out a terrible blood-bath amongst the unarmed Communists who had thus been delivered into his hands by Stalin. A little thing like that was not enough to persuade Stalin to change his policy, which was inspired by diplomatic motives of a much more important nature, and he ordered the Chinese Communists to continue the brilliant strategy towards "the traitor" Chiang Kai-shek which had failed so disastrously at Shanghai with a self-styled "Left-Wing Fraction" of the Kuomintang at Hankow. This new alliance was terminated six months later by a new slaughter of Communists there, followed by another one at Canton. Within the space of a year Chinese Communism had sacrificed the lives of more than ten thousand of its best

fighters to the policy of Stalin, many of them having been despatched only after the most atrocious tortures.

The Russian Opposition proved incapable or unwilling to draw any effective conclusions concerning the social nature of the Soviet State from such a shocking balance. For them it was still "unshakeably proletarian," and the only reproach they had to make to Stalin in the matter was that he had committed one more "tactical error." But on this field it was made particularly easy for the controller of the Russian press to answer because the happenings had taken place such a long way away: first of all the rebuff was concealed, then minimized, and finally blamed on to subordinates. But in exchange for these 10,000 dead Chinese Communists Stalin did not obtain the good graces of the British. He extricated himself from the affair by stoking up the old fear of war in the party, calculating that it would silence all criticism in the name of sacred Communist unity in the face of such a danger. In October, 1927, Trotsky and Zinoviev were excluded from the Central Committee.

With his customary cunning, based as usual on his knowledge of human weaknesses, Stalin staged the dénouement in the middle of the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Russian Revolution. He calculated that in the blind exaltation inspired by the memory of past glories, the Opposition would inevitably jar on the feelings of the masses like an outsider disturbing the devotions of the great Communist family, and the Opposition played into his hands by the supreme folly of trying to organize a street demonstration on November 7th, the anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Stalin's police were mobilized to deal with that. Most of the placards and banners of the Opposition were destroyed by violence long before they reached their destination, and the rest went under almost unnoticed in a flood of orthodox enthusiasm and general indifference. Many rank and file supporters of the Opposition were arrested *in flagranti* committing the crime of crimes: revealing by loud shouts the existence of internal dissensions in the party. It was the beginning of the end.

On November 15th, 1927, the Central Control Commission expelled Trotsky and Zinoviev from the party. The Fifteenth Congress of the party was held one month later. The 1,669 delegates present were all fanatical adherents of Stalin, and the Opposition did not hold even a single mandate, though it was represented by one or two persons holding only a consultative voice in the proceedings. Zinoviev caved in and tabled a declaration of loyalty which won him a respite. On December 18th the expulsion of Trotsky was unanimously confirmed, together with the expulsion of ninety-eight of his supporters.

On January 19th, 1928, Stalin inaugurated the repressive phase

of his struggle against the Communist Opposition by resorting to the age-old methods of Czarism. Trotsky and thirty of his associates were sent to Siberia, whilst a host of his less important followers were sent to prisons and "isolators" to join the innumerable non-Communist victims of a system of repression which its latest victims had never ceased to approve and support during the whole ten years of its existence. The same day Zinoviev and Kamenev took a further step on the downward path of abasement, imploring the victor for indulgence and abusing their former friends. The Second Opposition collapsed utterly, and Stalin remained victorious on the field. The aureole of a new Ivan the Terrible was already visible around his head.

"The Third (Right-Wing) Opposition"

In reality Stalin had not the least intention of permitting the new N.E.P. to re-establish capitalism, for under capitalism there would be no room for him and his devoted henchmen. He had merely closed his eyes during the years 1922-8 whilst the incentive of private interest assisted in the reconstruction of a country which five years of revolutionary upheaval had ruined. Industrialization and collective agriculture were displeasing to him only when they emanated from Trotsky. The winter of 1927-8 was a warning. Although the harvest was not deficient, the peasants, encouraged by the relative liberty of action they had been allowed in preceding years, refused to supply the towns with foodstuffs at prices which they regarded as derisory. Requisitions, often looking very much like War Communism, succeeded with great difficulty in preventing the shortage of foodstuffs in the towns developing into a famine.

In the sphere of foreign relations the situation of the Soviet Union was degenerating. The British Government broke off diplomatic relations, and Voikov, Soviet Ambassador to Poland, was assassinated in Warsaw. Stalin, who had previously exaggerated the danger of war in order to further his domestic designs, was now compelled to think of it in real earnest, and the weakness of Soviet industry filled him with misgiving. After considerable hesitation, he caused the sixteenth party conference to adopt "The First Five Year Plan" in April, 1929, and the Fifth Soviet Congress to follow suit.

This political *volte-face* naturally caused his old allies on the Right to turn against him, for they now realized that they had been duped and used as pawns in Stalin's personal game of power politics. Bucharin, Rykov and Tomskey immediately formed themselves into a third—and last—opposition. They accused Stalin of having broken his word that he would not interfere with the N.E.P., and of having copied the programme of the Left, which, according to him but yesterday, must inevitably lead to "a famine

artificially produced." In fact this prophecy, made by Stalin himself, was fulfilled to the letter—except that it was fulfilled under his auspices and not under those of Trotsky. Bucharin implored Stalin at least to "reduce the tempo" of his industrialization and collectivization, which had started at once with a bang amidst an atmosphere little short of hysteria.

After his victories over his more powerful enemies, the fight against these new enemies was little more than an administrative operation for Stalin. There was no need for him to look around for a new political alliance to strengthen his position; it was already overwhelmingly strong. All he did this time was to tack a bit in order to manoeuvre the hesitant Voroshilov and Kalinin over to his side, whom he needed for the time being at least in the Political Bureau. As soon as this palace intrigue succeeded, he openly launched a campaign in which the *Pravda* dragged the name and reputation of its own Editor, Bucharin, through the mire. Without waiting for any official party decisions, the Secret Police immediately got to work on the rank and file supporters of the new opposition, and at this renewed demonstration of the ruthless brutality and cynicism of the all-powerful General Secretary of the party the leaders of the Right grew afraid. Incidentally, they too had nothing better, or more serious, to put forward against Stalin than the objections of their predecessors in opposition. They too were devoted heart and soul to the all-devouring myth of monolithic Bolshevism. They too exploited all the devices of political amorality before they perished of it themselves. The industrialization plan had aroused a great wave of misguided, but none the less sincere enthusiasm in the country, and it was irresistible.

Within six months, Bucharin, Rykov and Tomsy all abjured their "errors," and were deprived of all their functions by a simple decision of the Central Committee. And on December 21st, 1929, Stalin celebrated his fiftieth birthday in an unexampled and unanimous welter of servility and toadyism which represented the national consecration of his now firmly established personal absolutism.

The Sixteenth Congress of the party in May, 1930, was nothing but a formal ceremony of registration for the new monarch. The vanquished representatives of the Right appeared for no other purpose than to serve as the target for organized abuse and insult. Whilst in exile, Rakovski, one of the prominent members of the Right-Wing Opposition, described the scene as "a savage picture of bureaucracy let loose":

"It is difficult to say who debased their human dignity more; those who made no reply to the outrage and bowed their heads humbly to the shrieking and cat-calling in the hope of a better future, or those who proffered the outrage, knowing in advance

that those they insulted and abused could not reply" (quoted by Souvarine, II).

Such cataleptic spectres which haunt the other side of fear were the dead shadows of the October Revolution. An abortive epoch flung them on to the screen once again and then vanished with them.

The Triumph of Absolutism

Thenceforward Stalin reigned supreme, his power unshared and beyond all discussion or question. By forcible methods, he succeeded in collectivizing agriculture and putting a great scheme of industrialization on the stocks. The production of the new Soviet economic system is, as we shall see, very inadequate and inefficient, but that makes very little difference to the power of Stalin. It is enough for him to provide his agents with the framework most suitable to the rapidly multiplying profusion of their sinecures, an economic structure most subject to "controls" and "co-ordinations," and a rural organization most subject to the exercise of a centralized authority.

After "Socialism in one country alone," the success of the Five Year Plan—not with regard to social progress and human well-being, but as an instrument of State totalitarianism—constitutes the second pillar of the Stalinist dictatorship. It permits the autocrat to safeguard and enhance his own omnipotence from day to day, taking what he needs to maintain his party, his police and his propaganda from the revenues of the new economic organization, a source of taxation unique in history. From 1930 to 1940, with *ukase* after *ukase* and corpse after corpse, Nectanebo III erected the new temple of his own divinity.

Every year the power of the Secret Police grows whilst remaining completely at the personal disposal of Stalin. The Society of Old Bolsheviks no longer exists. The limit, once fixed at 500 roubles, for the salaries of Communist officials, has been abolished. The propaganda of the régime even goes so far as to manipulate the human mind. The strict control of the party cadres, supremely efficient measure and a supreme idea, becomes more and more effective and complete every day. Leading Communists were executed in batches. Discovering by experience that the sound of the fusillades produced little or no echo, Stalin began to apply the same methods to the highest officials of the State.

In December, 1934, the assassination of the favourite Kirov by Nikolaiev was revenged by a hecatomb of thousands of Communists, both great and small. Little by little, Stalin carried out one of the most extraordinary and horrible machinations in history; one which permitted him to humiliate *all* the surviving leaders of the

November Revolution in an endless series of recantations punctuated by exclamations of adoration; to send them to prison, and from prison to exile, and from exile back to his feet again; to extract from them the confession of impossible crimes; to make them crawl on their knees whilst repeating dictated declarations; and finally to drag them into the dock in a sinister series of trials throughout the years 1936 to 1938 to inculcate themselves and then go to their deaths in one final degradation of their own consciences and a supreme hosannah of praise for their assassin.

That stroke completes the portrait of the Stalinist dictatorship now before our eyes. The resurrection of Pharaohism which we have followed step by step was not a conquest, not an achievement, but merely a heritage, a heritage usurped by intrigue, defended by crime and consecrated by ignorance. If any of us thought human dignity had triumphed we have only ourselves to blame. We have grossly deceived ourselves. Civilized man is nothing but a thin varnish on the body of the ancient slave. If vigilance relaxes for an instant, if progress ceases for a single moment, then barbarism flood over us again, inundating everything with its still glowing lava.

Let Stalin serve at least to drive that lesson home.

JUSTICE AND THE SECRET POLICE

"When a man is ashamed of himself he is pitiless towards others."
A. Dumas, *fils*.

OFFENCES AGAINST common law, political offences, private conflicts and public conflicts are all judged indiscriminately by Communist members of the tribunals of the Commissariat of Justice, or by the State Police, placed since 1934 under the Commissariat of the Interior.

The Courts

Each Republic of the Union has its own Commissariat of Justice and its own Public Prosecutor's Department, subordinated respectively, since July 20th, 1936, to the All-Union Commissariat and the Public Prosecutor of the Soviet Union. Political offences and important military offences come before the Supreme Court, common to all the federal republics.

Judges at all stages of the legal hierarchy are appointed by representative assemblies. The judge of a district is appointed by the Soviet of that district; the judge of a Central Court of a republic is appointed by the Supreme Council of that republic; a judge of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union is appointed by the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union. Only "primary judges," called people's judges, are elected by "universal, direct and secret suffrage." No court is assisted in its work by popular juries. Judges in the Soviet Union are not irremovable. Article 104 of the Constitution charges the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union with supervising the workings of all judicial organs throughout the Soviet Union. The revocations legally pronounced by this body are very numerous, but they are greatly outnumbered by the actions of the Secret Police committed outside all legal procedure.

The great majority of the members of Soviet courts have no previous legal training of any kind. For a man to be appointed a judge it is sufficient that he should have had "two years experience of responsible political functions in one of the institutions of the State, or in social or professional organizations of workers or peasants, or in the Communist Party." According to the *Izvestia* of May 9th, 1936, only 5 per cent. of all Soviet judges had had a course of training at a high school for law or even the abbreviated training known as "the higher course of jurisprudence."

Thanks to the clause providing for two years' experience, which places the Communist Party on the same footing with State institutions, Communists have practically colonized the judicial apparatus. They represent no less than 80 per cent. of the whole body of judges in the provincial courts, and 100 per cent. of those who sit in the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union.

All Soviet codes, and their number is legion, include provisions authorizing judges to pass verdicts without any legal basis, and be guided solely by "revolutionary reason." By virtue of Article 16 of the Code of Criminal Justice of November 22nd, 1926, acts constituting "a social danger" and not provided for in the existing codes may be judged "by analogy." It was thanks to this provision that in 1928-9 peasants who refused to sell their wheat at knock-down prices found themselves on trial under Article 107 of the Code against deliberate hoarding to the danger of the State. Article 58 of the Code, one of those most frequently invoked, deals with the repression of "all forms of counter-revolution." Soviet law has sagaciously gathered them together under fourteen headings, the thirteenth of which reads, "Historical Counter-Revolution"; it includes anything at all the authorities desire to include.

Soviet legislation harbours a great many abuses, and Soviet legal procedure can permit anything. By virtue of the Code of Criminal Procedure of February 15th, 1923, superior courts can prevent the interrogation of witnesses and suppress any discussion if they consider that the case has been sufficiently cleared up in the course of the preliminary examinations. After the assassination of Kirov, a decree was issued that all "counter-revolutionary" matters should be judged in the absence of the accused; neither the accused himself, although liable to the death sentence, nor his defending advocate, need be present at his trial. Procedure in such cases is degraded to the level of a mere confirmation of the case presented by the Secret Police.

The absolute subordination of justice to political ends in the Soviet Union can be clearly seen from the following declaration of Rytchkov on August 15th, 1938:

"The State demands that all its courts shall wage an implacable struggle against all the enemies of Socialism. . . . In sweeping away and utterly exterminating the traitorous Trotskyites and Bucharinites, the courts will be fulfilling their sacred duty towards the country" (*Bulletin Quotidien*, August 22nd, 1938).

In conformity with its political function, Soviet justice is particularly ferocious in its punishment of political offences; contrary to the custom in other and "degenerate" countries, in which political offences are regarded more leniently than common crime, a custom of which native Communists take full advantage and whose extension they demand. Every citizen of the Soviet Union risks death

if he dares to express a disillusioned opinion, if he fails to denounce "an enemy of the people," or if he too openly expresses a desire to leave the Socialist paradise to go abroad.

Venality, arbitrariness and cruelty are as much at home in Soviet justice as they were in Czarist justice in the past. The following description in *The Volga Commune* on June 27th, 1937, sounds almost as though it had been lifted whole from Gogol:

"The position of judge in the Kliavinsk District [Samara Region] was occupied until recently by a certain Stchankine. An inveterate drunkard, this person committed grave infractions of Soviet law which greatly prejudiced Soviet justice. . . . This Stchankine sentenced an accused to pay a fine of 300 roubles, which he then pocketed and used for himself. It sometimes happened that this judge presided at the sessions of his court in a state of complete inebriety. Eight important files of documents have disappeared from his office."

In an access of self-criticism (the Government was doubtless desirable of getting rid of a few of its judges) the *Izvestia* published the following extract from the memoirs of Judge Pupinin:

"I asked to be transferred to another district for the sole reason that I was unable to shake our judicial organs out of their old routine. Innocent people were hauled before the courts in great numbers. . . . Citizen Chakhov was kept in prison for three months merely because he left his passport at home. An outrageous arbitrariness prevails within the judicial organs charged with preparing cases for the courts" (*Izvestia*, June 27th, 1937; quoted in the *Entente Internationale Anticommunist*, August, 1937, Geneva).

Many Marxists having discovered the interested and sovereign influences of an iniquitous social order in bourgeois justice immediately proceed to discredit justice as such, regarding it as "a metaphysical strumpet." For them justice is nothing but an empty word, an abstraction whose vague prestige is exploited in the interests of capitalist demagoguery. They make a point of honour of ridiculing in public the notions of equity which their opponents violate in secret. Since there is no such thing as impartiality, they say, let us be partial, too, with the added advantage of ostentation. Instead of trying to re-establish the unreal and impossible purity of the juridical obligations constantly flouted by our enemies, let us flout them openly in our own "class" interests. Let us do away with courts which are subject to the power of money, and let us establish, not courts which are free and independent, but courts which are subject to the power of the working class. Such "Iron Marxists" fondly believe they are adopting the most enlightened and logical attitude; in reality it is merely the easiest.

The intellectual crime of cynicism, the pretentious acceptance of evil when there seems no way of combating it, so widespread

amongst revolutionaries, so innocent in appearance and so disastrous in effects, once again deflects just criticism from the wrong application of an excellent principle to a morbid contempt for the principle itself. Yet only a little common sense is necessary to see that the guarantees of legal procedure do not necessarily serve to cloak the rule of a privileged class, but are brought to do so only by fraud. Certainly, the revolutionary gods were athirst in 1917 as they were in 1793, and the practical necessities of a bitter struggle go far to explain a temporary forgetfulness of more generous aims, but "temporary" is the operative word. Such an excuse is valid only for the shortest possible period and even then within strict limits. But the Bolsheviks, on the contrary, deliberately idealized a weapon which was certainly very useful, but every bit as barbarous as the régime it was directed against. After "class truth," "class justice" was perpetuated and extended through the years, and beyond the arena of the original combat, to become one of the highest of revolutionary virtues. As a result barbarism was revived, headed only by a new Attila.

And thus twenty-seven years after the victory of the Russian Revolution, at a time when the Soviet Government prided itself on having long destroyed all vestiges of the class State in the Soviet Union, Vishinsky, former Soviet Public Prosecutor, could dare to jeer at one of the most democratic objectives of Marxism:

"The so-called doctrine of the withering away of the State has been a favourite subject of petty-bourgeois chatter about Marxism. . . . What we need is a strong State with a redoubtable repressive apparatus" (Vishinsky, II, pp. 32-4).

By its contempt for the fate of the individual, by its substitution of vengeance—political vengeance—for inquiry into the real responsibility, by the facilities it affords its judges to deprive the accused of all his rights, by its approval of punishment instead of reformation, Soviet justice has taken a worthy place in the long procession of institutions born of slavery to nourish cruelty.

Still another institution born of revolutionary Bolshevik cynicism has its worthy place in that procession. Having in the same way as Soviet justice, changed its victims and not its methods, it has revived and aggravated the worst traditions of Czarism and the Inquisition: it is Stalin's Secret Police.

The Secret Police

"When the Chinese Emperor Tsin-Chi-Hoang-Ti resolved to enclose the Empire of the Middle he caused the Great Wall to be constructed. Its construction cost the lives of several million men, but the wall grew in height and extent until finally it completely surrounded the country. The G.P.U. is such a Great Wall. . . . But to-day it is no question of a wall of stone and clay. The wall of the G.P.U. is an invisible wall. . . . It is the highest wall in the world, and it is built on blood and death, murder and torture."

Essad Bey, *The History of the G.P.U.*

The police, the cement of all unpopular régimes, was an essential instrument of Czarist dominance. The Ochrana, as the Czarist Secret Police was called, tracked down the political opposition, forced into a menacing shadow by political absolutism; it fomented "plots" to provide it with an excuse for precautionary repressive measures; and it performed in secret all those abominations which civilized opinion would have condemned had they been committed openly. Stalin's Secret Police has brilliantly industrialized the macabre exploits of its direct predecessor. It would seem sometimes as though a whole people were fast asleep in the grip of a nightmare without end. Whoever has never suffered a terrible nightmare can have no real idea of the terror some nights can hold; who has never been caught in the network of Stalin's Secret Police has never suffered a waking nightmare.

On February 6th, 1922, the Soviet Secret Police, previously known as the Vetcheka, previously known as the Tcheka (Extraordinary Commission for Combating the Counter-Revolution, created in 1917), took the name of State Political Direction, or G.P.U. On November 15th, 1923, that name was reserved for local organizations only, and the central organization became the United Political Direction of the Soviet Union, or O.G.P.U. (*Izvestia*, November 17th, 1923). In 1934 "the protection of revolutionary order and security in the State" was entrusted into the hands of a so-called All-Union Commissariat of the Interior, or "Gugobez" (*Pravda*, December 2nd, 1924). A little later this was again changed and the Secret Police became known as Narodny Komissariat Vnonbrechink Dial, or People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, giving the initials N.K.V.D. Such variations of name were constantly practised under Czarism as well. Execrated by the whole world, the Russian Secret Police, unable to change its character, vainly strove to disguise itself by changing its name.

Let us have done with all this foolery of harmless initials and call it plainly what it is and always has been, the Soviet Secret

Police. It is under the control of a "collegium" consisting of a president, two vice-presidents and the various chiefs of its "sections": the Counter-Revolutionary Section, or K.R.O.; the Foreign Section, or I.N.O.; the Special Section, or S.P.E.K.O.; the Economic Section, or E.K.U.; the Information Section, or I.N.F.O.; the Operational Section, or O.O.; the Eastern Section, or W.O.; the Frontier Section, or P.O.; and various auxiliary sections, such as the "Kommandantura," or penitentiary section, and those others we shall hear about later—or never.

Naturally, we cannot go into all the details, often quite impenetrable, of the organization of this world of fear, with its military detachments and its civilian departments, its official and secret agents, its factories, its co-operatives, its hotels, its trains, its Press, its wireless; its universities and its great buildings, whose erection in all centres was the first task of the Five Year Plan. It forms a state within a state, an immense network of subterranean tentacles controlling all the nerve centres of the country, seizing at once on any disaffected elements and exterminating them ruthlessly. It extends even beyond the borders of the Soviet Union into the farthest corners of the earth. The revelations of Kravchenko, coming after the facts exposed at the Ottawa espionage trial, leave no room for doubt. The I.N.O., or Foreign Section of the Soviet Secret Police, has its agents in all Soviet embassies everywhere. The chief of such groups is more powerful than his own ambassador. He may be formally the military attaché, or some apparently subordinate secretary—or the embassy chauffeur. The primary tasks of such agents is to keep watch on the rest of the diplomatic personnel. No member of this personnel knows which of his colleagues is an agent of the Secret Police, and all of them therefore live in a permanent state of fear and restlessness. The second task of these agents is to maintain connection with the Soviet spies operating in Moscow interests in the particularly country to which they have been assigned. In London, Paris or New York, in Hollywood, Shanghai or Buenos Aires, in the noise of our cafés and the peace of our universities, in our Ministries and in our laboratories, the Soviet Secret Police has its agents.

In the Soviet Union itself the Secret Police is everywhere, and nothing escapes its observation, certainly not the waste-paper baskets and dustbins. Kravchenko writes:

"... a safe to which I alone had the combination. Well, not quite I alone—the secret was shared by the N.K.V.D. . . . Only one such safe in the country—namely Stalin's—had a combination not known to the N.K.V.D. . . . Their right to examine my papers during my absence was so matter of course that they did not bother to cover up their traces after an inspection. . . . The most effective way to denounce one's betters, in fact, without risking a

direct report to the police, was to write out the facts 'for yourself' and to 'hide' them in your private safe. . . . Every piece of paper at the Sovnarkom is a State secret. You will be held strictly accountable if you leave any letter, document or carbon copy unprotected. Should you want to discard a document, or even a carbon copy, don't simply destroy it. Write your instructions across its face, and turn it over to the Special Department for burning" (Kravchenko, pp. 395-6).

At the beginning of the war the Commissariat for Munitions was placed under the control of Beria, the head of the Secret Police, a man with no technical abilities or knowledge, but an expert in terror. This extraordinary measure shows, amongst other things, how hazardous it is to count on the alleged spontaneous enthusiasm of Soviet workers "in defence of their conquests." Kravchenko writes: "All those who work in offices or other departments connected directly or indirectly with armaments live in fear and trembling, and would prefer sudden death to incurring the anger of Beria."

The official armed detachments of the Secret Police wear a special uniform which distinguishes them from ordinary police, who are known as "Militiamen." In 1937 the strength of these uniformed detachments was about 280,000 (Basily, p. 224). By 1947 they had grown to approximately half a million. This police army is kept in barrack fortresses specially constructed for defence whose network covers even the remotest provinces. The force has its own telephone system and is amply provided with modern weapons both for street fighting and open warfare. There is a Special Department, or "Tchon," whose duty it is to protect the Soviet leaders much in the way as Life Guards, Bodyguards, etc., once defended the throne in other countries. Some of these men watch over members of the Soviet Government when they travel; others watch the roads and railway lines; still others are responsible for the security of the Kremlin.

The most terrible sections of this Secret Police army are those which crush the least outward signs of discontent. They appear suddenly in a "combine" in the Urals where a strike is brewing; they crush a peasant rising in the Caucasus which threatens to disrupt "collectivization"; they suppress a revolt of prisoners in one of the White Sea camps; they collect an impost the fishermen of the Baikal have been lax in paying; they "achieve" the wheat delivery targets in the Ukraine; they uproot an entire people suspected of irredentism in the Crimea; and so on. When they are engaged in large-scale operations they hermetically seal off the whole area involved so that nothing can penetrate—and nothing emerge, not even news. And in the course of the action there is not a house, not a hut, which is not searched, not an individual

who is not examined, not a child who is not intimidated, not an authority which is not deposed, not a suspect who is not put up against a wall. Villages are razed to the ground as in the days when the "Golden Horde" irrupted over the country. All goods are seized, and families are broken up by being dispersed over the four corners of the Soviet Empire. Outside the impenetrable cordon, only Stalin knows that order has just been restored in Region X.

This new prætorian guard, the modern version of the Turkish Janissaries, is recruited primarily amongst members of the "Komsomol," or Communist Youth Association. Men of good physique and rudimentary conscience; workers with powerful bodies and good appetites, who at some time or the other, deliberately or by chance, have given proof of their loyalty to the régime. These men are cherished, excellently fed, clothed in well-fitting uniforms, praised by singers and poets—but they are also closely watched and controlled. They must take special Marxist courses and examinations and submit to public confessionals. Their least actions and gestures are watched, noted and interpreted. The officers' corps is trained in special schools; its members are the cream of the cream, and they are indissolubly connected with the régime by a pleasant stream of privileges and a great river of blood. A revolution in the Soviet Union would mean their slaughter down to the last man.

The Information Section, or I.N.F.O., has turned a tenth of the population into informers or "*sek-sots*." The Soviet Secret Police can afford such an abundance of agents because it does not pay the greater number of them. According to Essad Bey—and what he says is confirmed by Ciliga—such unpaid agents are recruited in a very simple fashion. An individual who is thought likely to be useful is arrested and brought before one of the officials of the Secret Police, who informs him point-blank: "We want you to work for us—or else . . ." In most cases the "or else" is quite sufficient; in others the normal Soviet practice of taking hostages does the trick satisfactorily. The new "recruit" is given a number and a secret name. His job is to report everything he hears and sees: the incidents which take place around him, the chance remarks of his fellows, anything whatever likely to be of use to his masters. He spies on his superiors, his inferiors and his equals. If necessary, he serves as agent-provocateur. He must regard himself as sufficiently paid by the security he now enjoys in his place of work, and by various minor favours in respect of housing accommodation, holidays, food, and so on.

Solovievitch, describing his life in the Soviet Union, his condemnation to a forced-labour camp and his escape, tells us about a special category of these Soviet Secret Police agents, the "activists":

"The psychological origin of 'activism' is admirably illustrated by the case, quite a common one, of the little girl, X, a 'Young Pioneer' who denounced her mother to the Secret Police to revenge herself for a whipping. After that it is obvious there is no return for her into the bosom of her family. The child spy has placed herself outside the pale. Henceforth she can live only by spying and denunciation. She has now only one friend and protector, the Soviet Government, of which she becomes the docile instrument and from whose toils she can never escape to the end of her days. A few years devoted to the vilest denunciations and to the basest tasks allotted to her, and then she is rewarded with a small post and the right to carry a worn leather case, symbol of the all-powerful bureaucracy. Then she can dream of the next stage, the holding of a party card, and a regular job with the Secret Police, unless some untoward accident causes her to end in a concentration camp. Not that such an accident need prevent her carrying on her customary activity, for her like is just as active behind barbed wire. And so she lives on, despised by her superiors and hated by her unfortunate inferiors" (Ivan Solonievitch, I).

There is no limit whatever to the powers of the Soviet Secret Police. It tries and condemns behind closed doors and there is no appeal from its verdict. It can do what it likes, when it likes, and how it likes. It carries out the sentence it passes, and it qualifies or modifies it in its own way. Punishments without logical relation with ambiguous offences are conditioned by the one guiding rule of spreading terror. Murder, imprisonment for life, forced labour, concentration camp, "Isolators," solitary confinement—all possible ways of dealing with human life are within its orbit. The Soviet Secret Police arrest without warrant: in daylight on the street, when their victim is leaving his factory after perhaps having accidentally damaged a machine—totem of the Five Year Plan—in the night from his bed, in a restaurant where he has complained too bitterly of the food provided by the co-operatives, in railway stations, in public parks, in cinemas. Often a man goes out after having been examined, thinking himself free to return to his ordinary life, but in the corridor outside another official beckons him and he leaves the circle of the living in very many cases never to return.

The family of an arrested man is informed of his fate only weeks after, and that indirectly. If he has been executed, his clothes are sent back to them; if he has been sent to Siberia they are asked to send him more clothes. Apart from that, his family remains in utter and complete ignorance of his fate. His wife and infant children, perhaps his grandmother or some other helpless relative he supports, are left behind without money and without food cards. Six months later possibly the man reappears "thin as a

rake, perhaps leaning for support on a stick, and talking as though he had risen from the grave. He has been in solitary confinement. He does not know why and he never will" (*Un Français moyen en U.R.S.S.*, p. 21).

This report, made to a meeting of graduates of the Institute of Chemistry in Nancy by a French engineer who had worked for fifteen months in Soviet Russia, is supported by the evidence of many other foreigners who lived in the Soviet Union and made the acquaintance of the Secret Police. Ciliga gives us details of the examination procedure, which he was unfortunate enough to study at first hand: solitary confinement for months; examinations lasting as long as twenty or even forty hours at a time, during which the examinee has to stand upright the whole time; summary executions before his eyes; the production of statements signed by friends and acquaintances inculcating him; an inextricable mixture of threats and promises; the administration of drugs; a show of falsehood to discover the truth; a show of truth to produce falsehood; logical, psychological and material traps; and oftentimes torture in the physical sense of the term. Young Mdivani, a champion tennis player, was executed before the eyes of his father, who refused to talk.

Amongst the dozens of witnesses whose evidence corroborates the truth of such outrages, but which we cannot quote here for want of space, let us take the letter of a Bulgarian oppositional Deputy named P. Koyev, which was read in the Bulgarian Parliament by his friend and colleague, Petkov, since himself hanged, during the debate of November 28th, 1946. After his election, Koyev, who had just been freed from one of the torture chambers of the Bulgarian section of the Soviet Secret Police, was too ill to attend Parliament. In the countries occupied, but not annexed, or not yet annexed, by the Soviet Union, the Soviet Secret Police is not fully able to flout the inter-Allied agreements guaranteeing the continued existence of certain vestiges of democracy. That, of course, is merely a question of time. But those few vestiges it has been compelled to respect, or pretend to respect, have enabled one or two protesting voices to be heard:

"I will describe to you in a few words how examinations are conducted at the Police Department, in order that you may have some idea of the systematic terror which is used against all detained persons. . . . A man is rendered completely prostrate morally and physically. He becomes indifferent to his fate, even to his life itself. He desires nothing but to reach the pre-arranged conclusion so that the intolerable suffering to which he is subjected shall end at last, a suffering which knows no limits either in time or degree. The breakdown comes when a man realizes with certitude that he is absolutely defenceless, and that those into whose hands he has

fallen recognize no legal defence, no law and no responsibility. They strive to convey this conviction to a man from the beginning and without cease. Contrary to the usual legal procedure, you are condemned first, and only then do they examine accusations and seek proofs. The latter are obtained by physiological terror (hunger, absence of sleep, thirst), physical terror (blows and being compelled to stand upright both day and night) and psychological terror (suggestions that a man's nearest and dearest have also been arrested and imprisoned, etc.).

"I am going to tell you how all this happened to me. Two days after my arrest—two days I spent in a dark, narrow cell without contact with the outside world—I was led to the offices of the Security Police. In the presence of the Head of Service "A," Ganev, and Inspector Zeyev, I was accused of having approved of the destruction by fire of certain Russian cotton stored at Borgas in 1945, and of having taken part in the revolutionary movement organized by Damyan, Belchev and Cyril Stanchev. . . . I was shown confessions written by these men in which they 'admitted' that you and I had taken part in the complot. After that I was left in a cell for twenty-two days without being examined. During that period I was subjected to a hunger regimen—a little bread and water—and to various humiliations. The object of such treatment is to exhaust a man physically and to weaken his power to resist. You are to be brought to realize that you are completely defenceless. At eight o'clock on the twenty-fifth day of my imprisonment—it was a Saturday—I was taken up to the fourth floor for examination. This examination went on without interruption for twenty-four hours a day. My questioner was changed every three hours, but all the time I had to stand up without food and without sleep—and, what was particularly cruel in those suffocating days and nights of August, without water, manacled and prevented from leaning against a wall or table. At every three-hour stage of this examination the same questions were repeated and the answers written down *ad nauseam*. . . . My hands and wrists were swollen and my feet were incredibly distended. Not a scrap of pity was shown to me all this time, and my requests, particularly for water, were completely ignored. After twenty-four hours of such treatment you no longer want food, but your head is empty and ringing terribly. And if in that state you do not repeat exactly the same dates, days, times and names at each new stage of the interminable examination, woe betide you. On the fifth day they flung me into a bare cell and I collapsed on the floor and slept like a log for twelve hours. When I finally awoke it was with the idea that my examination was at last at an end.

"At eleven o'clock in the evening they took me upstairs again. This time the room was smaller and the people were different,

except Inspector Zeyev, who was in charge of my examination and who conducted it to the end. He informed me that as a result of my obstinacy, 'militia methods' had failed, and they now proposed to try 'police methods.' At a sign from him, I was seized and forced to the ground. My hands were bound, a rifle barrel was slipped between my arms and knee-joints, and I was turned over on to my back and gagged. Then my feet were beaten with a thick and heavy rubber truncheon. This went on until two o'clock in the morning, three hours in all, during which Zeyev questioned me. The procedure was carried out for four nights in succession. On the last night other inspectors were present, the commanders of groups, and even the commander of the capital, Veselin Georgiev. I was beaten for the meeting on March 30th, 1945" (*Res Publica*, Paris, London and New York, March, 1947).

Troubled regions furnish the Soviet Secret Police with an opportunity of demonstrating its value and its peculiar abilities, but regions which are too submissive threaten to deprive it of its *raison d'être* as far as the Soviet Government is concerned. The temptation might grow too strong to cut down a budget already fantastically large. In such circumstances the Soviet Secret Police has recourse to the classic instrument of all police which have become an end instead of a means: provocation. It foments troubles in order to earn the credit for suppressing them.

All branches of the service being 'secret, anarchy reigns at all stages of Holy, Planned Russia, and many "class struggles" proceed vigorously against windmills. Essad Bey reports an actual case which, although it is reminiscent of stage farce, nevertheless contains elements of much graver machinations. An agent A was instructed to form a band of forgers in order to entice the enemies of the régime from their hiding places, where they were probably lying in wait for just such an opportunity to forge currency notes and undermine the régime. Agent A approached a suspect B and found it quite easy to persuade him to come in on the deal, help forge banknotes and make his fortune. "Splendid," thought agent A. "Extraordinary and admirable coincidence," thought B, for he too was an agent of the Secret Police, and now thought he had discovered a dangerous enemy of the people. He ran off to his chief to report the criminal proposition which had just been made to him. This Comrade Chief No. 2 was not in a position to know the ingenious plan of Comrade Chief No. 1, and he too was greatly pleased. He ordered his agent B to push on with the affair as quickly as possible, whilst agent A, who had in the meantime reported back his success to Comrade Chief No. 1, received identical instructions. The conspiracy of the Secret Police against itself began to thicken.

A feverish activity arose. A third conspirator was enrolled, C,

another agent of the Secret Police. In the dead of night, and in the greatest secrecy in a lonely quarter of the town, one secret agent met another secret agent, and the two secret agents met a third secret agent. . . . And the next day three reports on the complot lay on the desks of Comrade Chiefs Nos. 1, 2 and 3 respectively. When the number of conspirators had reached a dozen, agent A suggested respectfully to Comrade Chief No. 1 that the time had come to act, because he felt that suspicions were beginning to arise amongst his comrade conspirators. Comrade Chief No. 1 adopted the suggestion and passed on the matter to his superior, Director X, who was already on his toes because this was the tenth time this association of currency forgers had been reported to him. Everything was then rapidly prepared for the great blow. A secret and subversive printing shop was set up, and forged notes finally began to be printed—after a respectable expenditure of real ones. Then one night, after the most meticulous precautions and arrangements, the Trotskyite-Bucharinite-Zinovievite hotbed of conspiracy for the re-establishment of capitalist slavery was surrounded by armed Secret-Service detachments and Socialism triumphed.

The next day it was discovered that nine of the ten conspirators were agents of the Secret Police. The tenth was either shot out of hand or given the chance to become a secret agent himself.

Bureaucratic trickery and baseness mingle with sadism to cover the country with a chronic eczema of purulent complots. Real discontent mingles with provocation; the victims mingle with the hangmen; the blood of some with the delirium of others. Like a child obsessed with morbid imaginings, the Soviet Secret Police is afraid of its own shadow. It feels itself on a volcano, and is itself the tossing lava of the volcano. The nightmare it inspires amongst the population begins to haunt its own lair. The terror it has unleashed enters into a circle without end.

The Moscow Trials

Let us now deal briefly with the masterpiece of the Stalinist terror: the trials of the former leaders of the Russian Revolution in Moscow.

Apart from the personality and reputation of the accused men, two things in particular excited universal interest: the secret preliminary examinations and the unanimous confessions of the accused.

We have already had occasion to examine the technique put into operation at such preliminary hearings, and we have seen that their object is not to establish the truth, but to provide proofs of the pre-established guilt of the accused. Let us be clear about

the fact that torture is commonly applied even to star accused who are to be brought into public court. It is easy for a sadistic fantasy to perfect methods of torture which leave no trace. The simplest of all, the most widely used, and the most rational in view of the shortage of space, is to herd many prisoners into one cell. You take four bare walls surrounding perhaps three yards or so square. Then you put about thirty prisoners into it. That is all. Oh, yes, just one or two details: you give them no soap or water, and no change of linen. And there you let them stand, walk, sleep, spit, sweat and relieve all their natural urges for a week, two weeks, three weeks, a month, two months, three months. From time to time you shoot one or two of them in front of the others, and then replace them by one or two more in order that the overcrowding shall not diminish.

As far as moral torture is concerned, the system of hostages provides the essentials required for that. There is a method, for instance—a very simple one—which cannot be detected by visiting foreign journalists: the accused man is made to witness a film depicting the most refined tortures conceived by a sadistic fancy, and then a whisper suggests that that might be the fate of his wife, or his little daughter, if . . .

We know for certain (we have quoted the case of Mdivani) that members of an accused man's family are sometimes executed before his eyes if he opposes the will of his questioners too obstinately. Or perhaps one of the examining agents will suddenly produce a letter from the accused's wife, or son, or brother, inculcating him, or breaking off all relations with him, or perhaps merely pleading with him to give way and do what is required of him. This procedure is only one of the many in a whole series of falsifications and deceptions designed to confuse and break down the morale of the unfortunate accused, who is cut off from all reliable news of the outside world.

The use of such methods was clearly illustrated by the Krestinsky incident at the trial of the "Right-Wing Trotskyites" in March, 1938. Quite suddenly in a public session of the court, Krestinsky began to protest his innocence and to complain of the violent methods used against him during the preliminary examinations. The next day, pale and haggard, and in a monotonous tone as though saying something learned by rote, he declared himself completely guilty of everything with which he was charged.

The fact that the preliminary investigations provide the authorities with ample resources of an intellectual, emotional, physical and psychological nature to enable them to obtain any result decided on in advance seems incredible at first, but that is only because several centuries of judicial progress along humane lines have made us unaccustomed to certain methods of pressure. We

have even forgotten they ever existed. But it is sufficient to recall that the Holy Inquisition obtained confessions quite as extraordinary as those extracted in the Moscow trials, from accused who appeared every bit as normal when they emerged from the dungeons as the Moscow accused did. One accused, a "sorcerer," described his conversations with the Devil; another accused, an apostate, proclaimed that he had spread the plague; a further accused, an alchemist, admitted having received his phials on a particular night from a particular demon. And they all admitted their guilt to the last, and blessed the fire which burned them. A man need do no more than unearth such precedents from the dust and opprobrium of centuries, and dare to resuscitate the methods which achieved them. Stalin dared.

And we must not forget that not all the accused were brought into court. Those of a rare courage and toughness who still remained morally upright during the preliminary examinations; those of whom it was feared that they might not stand by their confessions in public, or might not appear convincing enough; such men were shot out of hand. That was the fate of many well-known Bolshevik leaders like Karakhan, Yenukidze, Mdivani and Preobrazhensky; that was the fate of many of the lesser, but still known Bolsheviks such as Beloborodov, the man who ordered the execution of the Czar and his family; that was the fate of innumerable unknown Communists, for heroism and strength of soul are often stronger amongst anonymous revolutionaries than amongst their better-known leaders.

The dishonesty of the confessions made during the course of the trials can be seen clearly from a number of perfectly simple considerations and a number of patent facts.

The first thing to note is that no Stalinist trial ever satisfied the classic, universal and indispensable conditions of any ordered legal process—namely, clear and incontrovertible proofs of guilt. The letters which the accused confessed to having written or received were recited by them by heart. There was never any confrontation of witnesses; their evidence was never subjected to analysis. Innumerable well-known people cited by the accused were never brought into court and never interrogated. Certain of these people, non-Russians, openly and generously offered to give sworn evidence before any body the Soviet Government cared to name. Their good offices were never utilized.

Another thing to note is the perfect unanimity of the confessions. Out of more than 130 leading personalities charged in five great processes with the most heinous crimes, all pleaded guilty. The only chink in this vast armour of culpable unanimity was the Krestinsky incident previously mentioned. It lasted for five minutes. This record of unanimity in crime is incompatible with the long survival

of Stalin's power. We are asked to believe that the most powerful political leaders and police officials, the most intimate collaborators, ministers, generals and scientists, had formed themselves into one great block without a crack or fissure against their leader. That they had conspired together for years under all circumstances and with all means, whilst he, the one object of their resentment, remained alone and upright in the middle of the hostile band, unharmed and tranquil. During the process against what was described as "the parallel Centre," a number of the accused revealed an alleged plan to attack the Kremlin. Immediately afterwards all the officers of the Kremlin garrison and all the Secret Service agents entrusted with their surveillance were found guilty of complicity and shot. Is it not astonishing—no, positively flabbergasting—that an attack so well planned and so strongly supported not only did not succeed, but was never made at all?

It is only one of a vast number of improbabilities which accumulate as soon as the facts are examined.

Let us take the moral improbability first. All the accused presented themselves as having been implacably hostile to the régime. But in their evidence they had not a single word to say against it. When a terrorist confesses, he proclaims a political faith at the same time, a faith he regards as worthy of all honour, and justifying his terrorist action. If he admits the crime he is charged with, he denies its infamous character. Other terrorists, such as the men who came up for trial in the Nuremberg Processes, did not dare to deny the enormity of the crimes with which they were charged, but they did deny being responsible for them. The accused in Moscow were made of different stuff altogether. They all had the firmest and deepest conviction of the "monstrously criminal" nature of their designs, and they all knew that "their methods were as base and vile as the aims they were intended to bring about." And they described themselves as "counter-revolutionary vermin" (confession of Zinoviev published in the *Pravda* on September 21st, 1936). Their accord and agreement with the régime of which they openly avowed themselves to have been the enemy since its inception reached such a stage of perfection at the precise moment of their trial that their evidence together with the questions of the judge formed a positive manual on the supreme excellence of Stalinism.

"With what aim in mind did you want to provoke the overthrow of the Soviet Union?"

"With the aim of re-establishing capitalist slavery and the power of the capitalists and the feudal seigneurs."

"Why did you want to give back the factories to the bourgeois and the lands to the seigneurs?"

"To rob the workers and peasants of the conquests they had made under the leadership of great Comrade Stalin."

And so on, and on, and on.

And then there is the question of political improbability. These men declared that they had assassinated Lenin, although innumerable letters, speeches, political acts, private gestures, and witnesses such as that of Krupskaya herself leave no doubt whatever that they were devoted to Lenin and admired him beyond all bounds. It is a patent absurdity to declare that all the surviving leaders of the November Revolution were the paid agents and spies of all sorts of Powers hostile to the Soviet Union and hostile to each other. Logically, we should have to believe, if that were true, that the Soviet régime, glorified by all Stalinists, is really only the result of evil machinations by half a dozen thieves' kitchens in capitalist Europe.

And then there are the innumerable material improbabilities. A Soviet engineer is accused of having deliberately constructed railway carriages which rolled so much that they made passengers train-sick, thus causing the proletariat to be discontent with the achievements of the Revolution. And then there was the official in the Soviet Commissariat of Agriculture who deliberately caused weeds to be grown in the fields instead of corn, etc. And a high official of the railway administration "organized" 3,500 accidents during the course of a single year. A Soviet chemist discovered a criminal process for accumulating fire-damp in the Socialist mines in order to cause disasters. The supposed authors of these fantastic devilries, which, incidentally, represent technical exploits of a truly sensational nature, were precisely the least well situated to carry them into effect. They were all high officials ensconced in their offices. What they planned was translated into reality only after innumerable orders, transcriptions, circulars, and so on—in fact, the usual long and complicated channels through which any orders from on high must pass before they arrive at the point where they are put into practice. How many accomplices would a Minister require before he could arrange for weeds to be sown in the fields instead of grain, or before he could switch points, or shunt trains to bring about railway disasters? And if the accused really had such an army of subordinate criminals devoted to their will, what sort of a lunatic asylum is the Soviet civil service? And why wasn't a single one of the obviously numerous accomplices put in the dock side by side with the arch-criminals? Or did they do it all alone? Leaving their well-watched offices full of employees, many of them agents of the Secret Police, ten times a day and more, spreading themselves out with the speed of light over millions of square miles, sowing weeds instead of grain, or picking out the train to suffer disaster, and then returning, the job well done, and rubbing their hands in glee?

And, finally, let us note the patent falsehoods. The rare details

brought forward to give verisimilitude to the confessions of the accused, where they were capable of being examined outside the Soviet Union, have all, without exception, proved to be false. The engineers in the 1930 trial were stated to have been in correspondence with a White *émigré*, but the man was found to have been dead for a number of years previously. The Mensheviks brought to trial in 1931 were alleged to have conspired with Abramovitch on Russian soil on the very day he was present at an international Socialist conference in Brussels. One of the accused in the trial of the sixteen stated that he had met Trotsky's son Sedov at the Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen in 1932, but the hotel in question ceased to exist in 1917. In the trial of "the parallel Centre," Piatakov declared that he had journeyed by air from Germany to Oslo, where Trotsky was staying at the time, but the Norwegian authorities proved that throughout the whole time Piatakov was in Berlin not a single aeroplane coming from Germany had landed at the Oslo Aerodrome. Another of the accused declared that he had met Trotsky in the Bois de Boulogne at a time when Trotsky was in Royan under the closest surveillance of the French police. During the trial of the "Right-Wing Trotskyites," various people abroad, including Mme. Paz, Rosmer, Emil Buré and Theodore Dan, were charged with having done various things which in the stated circumstances it was materially impossible that they could have done.

And, finally, let us call to mind that during the German debacle most of the Nazi archives were captured intact, and that not a line was found substantiating the alleged negotiations which the "traitors" of Moscow were supposed to have conducted with the Nazi Government. The modest reserve of Soviet Government circles at the time of the great unpacking of all the Nazi secrets in 1945 is a pertinent confession, if a silent one, that the charges launched in the years 1936-8 by Vishinski against the helpless men in the dock were false, and that he knew perfectly well that they were false.

It is pointless to harp on the methods by which such "confessions" must have been obtained. The analysis of their content is sufficient to prove amply that they were the inventions of a brain incapable of imagining anything human, and convinced at the same time that he could do as he liked with people.

The question has occasionally been raised as to whether the Soviet Secret Police is in reality so subject to the government it was created to serve. To us the answer seems in no doubt. Beyond all discussion, the Secret Police dominates all Soviet citizens and all Soviet organisms, including the Army and even the Communist Party, but equally beyond discussion it is itself dominated by the supreme leader of the State—that is to say, by the Secretary of the

Communist Party, that is to say, by Joseph Stalin. Orders which come from the Kremlin are iron law for the Secret Police. A President of the Central Collegium who dared to transgress them would find not a single one of his numerous subordinates ready to follow him. It often happens that the Political Bureau or the Secretariat (read: Stalin in either case), gives instructions to sections of the Secret Police above the head of the Central Collegium, or annuls instructions already given by the latter. As in all other cases, nominations to posts in the Secret Police have to pass through the "Direction of Cadres," and that is one of the control points of Stalin. The regular political examinations to which all the chiefs of the Secret Police are subjected are carried out by the Central Control Commission of the party, and its power to purge is exercised with the same sovereignty there as everywhere else.

One fact is sufficient to illustrate the undisputed power of Stalin over the Secret Police and its complete subordination to his will, and that is the way he massacres its chiefs whenever he feels inclined. Djerjinsky, former head of the Tcheka, was the first President of the Central Collegium. One day he committed the imprudence of publicly criticizing a measure ordered by Stalin. Stalin replied with a swift oath. Djerjinsky turned pale. He died suddenly that same evening in enigmatic circumstances. His place was taken by Menjinski, who also died in strange circumstances, to be replaced in his turn by Yagoda. In the same period the head of the Foreign Section of the Secret Police, Trilisser, was executed without trial and replaced by Messing. Messing did not last long before he disappeared. Yagoda, one of the cruellest chiefs the Soviet Secret Service ever had, made his name infamous in Europe by organizing the first two big trials in which, amongst others, all the surviving leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution perished. But in the third trial he found himself in the dock with the others, and then confessed that he had enriched himself from the funds of his organization, poisoned his predecessor, Menjinski, with the assistance of a doctor, and brought about the deaths of Gorki and Kuibishev. He was executed with all his assistants.

The torch was passed on to Yegov, who succeeded in holding it for a year before disappearing in his turn. However, it was a year well used, for it cost the lives of eight of the eleven leaders of the Secret Police, and the dismissal of three others. But Louchkov, head of the Far-Eastern Section, and Krivitzky, head of a Foreign Section, had succeeded in making their escape from the Soviet Union. Yegov paid for that negligence with his head, and his place was taken by Beria. All these changes and executions were brought about by Stalin by means of a simple order, sometimes verbal.

As we can see, the Soviet Secret Police, Tcheka, G.P.U., or

what have you, has been better trained by Bolshevism than the Ochrana was by Czarism. It is an all-powerful sword, but it is held firmly in the hands of a despot. It is an instrument authorized to control and terrorize everything and everybody else, but it is only an instrument. It is created apart from and above all the others for the sole end of being used directly by the supreme master. Stalin has revived the persistent tradition of the Arabian Caliphate: to have an army of servitors, and a sword-bearer to keep them in order; a herd at its bidding and a dog to control it. The Soviet Secret Police is Stalin's dog.

THE RED ARMY

Neither an Armed People nor an Army of the People

FOR A LONG TIME, there were Communists who believed that the Russian proletariat was armed. Nothing could be falser. At the general demobilization in 1921, and again at the demobilization in 1945, the released soldiers went back into civilian life—leaving their arms behind them. The armament industry is nationalized like all the others, and the sale of arms to individuals, guns, revolvers and cartridges, is strictly forbidden. The surveillance of all depots and arsenals is the exclusive concern of the Army. Those rare groups of civilians who retained rifles up to about 1929 (factory guards, watchmen at railway sidings, ports, etc.) were subsequently drafted into the Militia, whose structure is much more military than that of Western European police. The “armed workers” who parade and march in procession on May Day or on the anniversary of the Revolution on November 7th are specially selected bands of Communists. They are trained for marching and parading, but even so their arms are not loaded, and they are distributed the evening before the parade and collected again the day after.

During the famine of 1932-3 even the sickles of the peasants were collected every day after the work in the fields was over and put away safely in the store-room of the *kolkhoze*, where they were guarded by Militiamen. In fact, the Soviet Union is the country in the world to-day where the ordinary civilian most lacks any means of attack or defence. Apart from the various bodies of police, only the Regular Army is provided with weapons, and we shall see before long that the Army is completely withdrawn from any form of popular or public control whatever.

Army Organization

In its extraordinary session in the spring of 1939, the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union promulgated a new Army law.

Formerly a great number of citizens had been excluded from the obligation of military service. First of all there were the members of so-called “hostile classes,” the sons of former bourgeois, *kulaks* or *nepmen*, etc., and then there were men with onerous family obligations. So much for legal exemptions. In addition, the practice of the recruiting committees was to dismiss so many men as unsuited

for military service for this that or the other reason that in the end not more than a third of the annual contingent were actually called to the colours. Thus on January 1st, 1934, the permanent effectives of the Red Army amounted to only 562,000 men. We may assume that up to that date the Soviet Government required the Army authorities to make a careful selection amongst the vast mass of human material at their disposal, both from the purely physical and the social standpoint, and to train the accepted recruits not only into good soldiers, but into reliable, even fanatical, supporters of the régime.

However, from 1935 onwards, in view of the increasingly threatening international situation, the Red Army had to be greatly strengthened to render it capable of meeting all emergencies. A progressively larger number of recruits were therefore called up, and these, like their predecessors, were trained, not only in the use of arms, but also in Marxist-Leninism. By 1936 the permanent effectives of the Red Army had risen to 1,300,000 men. The disqualification of certain categories of citizens for military service was quashed by the spectacular decree of April 20th, 1936, permitting Cossacks not only to serve in the Army, but to be brigaded into special Cossack units. At the same time they were again permitted to wear swords.

Czarism fashioned the men recruited along the banks of the Don and the Volga into the masterpiece of its repressive armaments. The Cossacks are horsemen of extraordinary ability, distinguished both by their fierce cruelty and their dashing courage. Under the old régime they were equipped with leather knouts as well as their arms, and all the hatred of the masses against Czarist absolutism concentrated itself on the Cossacks. During the Civil War the Cossacks were the best and most reliable troops the White commanders had. Reconciliation between them and the Soviet power was sealed by a decree issued on April 20th, 1936, and celebrated in the style typical of Stalinist "Socialism."

"Henceforward the sharp sword of the Cossack will decapitate anyone who dares to interfere with peaceful and creative labour in the great country of Socialism" (*Izvestia*, April 21st, 1936).

Two ancient enemies, the Soviet power and the Cossack caste, were now reconciled, and it is anyone's guess which had developed most towards the ancient standpoint of the other.

Military soviets and the election of officers by their men, once the pride of all Bolsheviks, had not survived the technical exigencies of the Civil War and the vigorous attacks of the White armies. By the end of the Civil War such democratic achievements had completely disappeared. All that was left of the spirit of 1917 was the abolition of the old Officers Corps and its hierarchy, and the abolition of saluting. A decree issued on September 22nd, 1935,

revived both the one and the other. A little later a new decree abolishing "false democratic conceptions," which, according to the Soviet Press, were still regrettably widespread, re-established the old cadet schools, or military academies, at which the future members of the Officers Corps were completely separated from the rest of society from the age of five onwards, put into uniform and indoctrinated with the pure spirit of a military caste. At the same time the distinction between officers and men was extended beyond duty hours and established absolutely. The honorific title of marshal was reintroduced and accorded to Voroshilov, Tuchachevsky, Egorov, Bluecher and Budienny on November 20th, 1935. Stalin himself adopted the title in 1941. Decorations and medals had been reintroduced at an even earlier period.

The Army Law of the spring of 1939 completed the transformation of the Red Army from an instrument of interior domination to an instrument of foreign policy. A decree promulgated on August 11th, 1936, had already lowered the calling-up age from twenty-one years to nineteen years, and later it was again lowered to eighteen years. No dispensation was granted to students. Length of service was two years in the ranks, and three years for officers and non-commissioned officers. Just before the war the term of service was increased to four years. After demobilization men belonged to the reserve up to their fiftieth year, instead of, as previously, to their fortieth. This latter measure increased the strength of the mobilizable reserve to more than 16,000,000 men. The training periods, during which reservists were called up for refresher courses, were considerably extended, until finally they reached the exceptional length of eighteen months for the rank and file, two years for non-commissioned officers and three years for officers.

Women have their own formations, including the medical and veterinary corps and various technical auxiliary services. On demobilization, their members were regarded as on the reserve in the same way as men, and subject to the same periods of refresher training.

Since the promulgation of this new Army Law, the permanent effectives of the Red Army in peacetime are probably around 2,500,000 men, though in 1947 there were still 5,000,000 men under arms.

The Political Structure of the Army

The only trait which distinguishes the Red Army from the armies of ordinary capitalist countries has nothing to do with its allegedly more "popular" character; in fact, on the contrary, it underlines its greater subordination to the dictatorship. Side by

side with the ordinary military organization there is a powerful political organization, parallel at every stage of the military hierarchy, and absolutely subject to the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

During the Civil War Trotsky, as Commander of the Red Army, was compelled to accept the services of numerous ex-Czarist officers because they alone were capable of countering the technical superiority of the White armies. In order to discourage any inclination to conspiracy on their part, he introduced the system of so-called political commissars to keep an eye on them. When the Red Army was compelled by the needs of the times to abandon the voluntary principle of recruitment, and to take social strata into its ranks whose revolutionary convictions were doubtful, the institution extended its activities to a control of the political morale of the Army as a whole. The system grew tremendously and rooted itself deeply in the Red Army, particularly as it proved an effective instrument for the political subordination of the Army to the Soviet power. The new organization developed into the redoubtable P.O.R.K.K.A., or Political Administration of the Red Army of Workers and Peasants. Its members were known as "Politrouk" or political instructors, though in popular parlance they were still called "political commissars."

The organizational structure of this political organization is exactly parallel to that of the Army. At the summit it is under the direct control of the Central Committee, representing its Military Department, and owing no allegiance to the War Ministry. A special section of the Secret Police is attached to each stage of this political organization and subject to the Central Collegium of the Secret Police as a whole. The relations between this military political organization and the ordinary Communist organizations in the Army are much the same as the relations between the *politotdels* and the ordinary Communist organizations in the rural areas.

The regimental cells and above them the Communist committees at the various stages of the Army hierarchy merely group all those soldiers, non-commissioned officers, etc., who are members of the party or the Communist Youth Association. The sections of the Military Political Organization (P.O.R.K.K.A.), on the other hand, are composed of specialist Communist officials. Just as the ordinary Communist cells in the *kolkhozes* are subject to the control of the *politotdels*, so the regimental cells in the Army are subject to the Politrouk. This is merely another example of the general subordination of the lower organizations to the "apparatus" which characterizes the whole Soviet political system. Something of the same sort existed in the German Nazi organization. Germans living abroad were unpaid agents of the special Nazi organizations

charged with conducting German propaganda, etc., abroad. In the same way, members of the Communist Party in the Red Army are the auxiliaries and the spies of the Politrouk.

The Politrouk enjoy enormous power and authority in the Red Army. They are, of course, in complete and exclusive charge of the political instruction of the Red soldier, 40 per cent. of whose time is devoted to political matters, and, in addition, it is their task to watch over military discipline, military morale and military bravery (Article 93 of the 1936 Service Regulations). They control all military publications and they take part in the drafting of military texts, orders and laws. In consequence, their influence also extends to the technical sphere. They watch over the officers, organize special meetings and discussions for them, subject them to political examinations, preside over promotions and appointments, which are all made exclusively by choice. And, finally, it is the Politrouk who draw up the reports on the situation in the Army, and these reports have often led to sinister purges. In a speech to the Eighteenth Party Congress on March 13th, 1939, Voroshilov provided us with some interesting details concerning the operations of the P.O.R.K.K.A.

"Between the Seventeenth and the Eighteenth Congresses of the party the political apparatus in the Army has considerably strengthened its effectives. On January 1st, 1934, they numbered 15,000, but by 1939 they had grown to 34,000. . . .

"These élite members of the Communist organization in the Army are the active cadres, infinitely devoted to the cause of Lenin and Stalin, and during the past two or three years they have conducted themselves as real militants of the party. . . . These political workers, together with the active mass of the cadres of the party and the Communist Youth in the Army, are carrying out a vast educational work to raise the political level of our Army, and to prevent the rise, not only of traitors in the Army, but also of all sorts of sceptics, grouseurs and other riff-raff" (Voroshilov, pp. 94-5).

After the ruthless purges of 1937 and 1938, this P.O.R.K.K.A. organization was subjected to one or two changes worthy of note. On May 17th, 1938, so-called military councils were established in each region, composed of the officer in charge of the particular region and his adjutants, and two commissars of the P.O.R.K.K.A. The primary task of these councils is "to watch over the morale of the Army," which, of course, parallels the P.O.R.K.K.A., but at the same time they constitute "the supreme military authority" of the region, which, of course, parallels the authority of the commanding general of the region as well.

These local military councils are under the authority of the War Minister as President of a "General Military Council" created

in 1938, and composed of eleven high officials of the State, including Stalin.

It would seem that Stalin's intention here was to create organisms, both locally and centrally, in which the parallel administrations of the P.O.R.K.K.A. and the Army, between which there had been friction which had threatened to become dangerous, could fuse satisfactorily. This explains the double character, military and political, of the new councils, in which Army officers and political commissars sit side by side. In placing these co-ordinating organs under the direction of the Ministry for War, Stalin has accorded formal satisfaction to the officers of the Red Army at no cost or danger to himself, since the Red General Staff as a whole has been carefully chosen for its entire devotion to him.

A decree promulgated on July 16th, 1941, and published in the *Izvestia* on the following day, restored to the political commissars the powers that they had just been compelled to share with the military commanders, but a year later, in the merciless fire of war, the Soviet Government was compelled to free commanders in the field from the oppressive tutelage of the Politrouk, and the tasks of the latter were once again strictly confined to political and police matters. In the hierarchical and technical plan they were retrograded below the military operational commands by decrees promulgated on October 10th and 13th, 1942.

The Red Army has thirteen military academies, and six military faculties attached to the civil institutions of higher education. Pre-military preparation and training both physical and theoretical, and the preservation of the military spirit amongst ex-Service men, is in the hands of a whole complex of organizations, of which the principal is the well-known Ossoaviakim, an organization for the furthering of national defence and the development of the chemical and aero industries.

Did the Red Army save the World?

The reader may perhaps have followed us with a certain amount of impatience through the labyrinth of Soviet military organization. To pronounce the two words "Red Army" a little while ago was to release a flood of approval and gratitude which left no place for any other theme. However, history has taught us only too often that in generalizations we are over-liable to slide uncritically from assumption to certainty, from gratitude to adoration, and from acclamation to deification. Therefore, we must now ask the reader to forget his exaltation for a moment and follow us in an objective analysis of the verifiable facts. But to put him a little at his ease, let us begin by saying that we, too, recognize that from the summer of 1943 to the end of the war the Red Army accomplished a military feat of real grandeur and magnitude. What we

are now interested in is to separate it from its international repercussions, to establish the part played by design and that played by circumstances, and then further to examine whether the political value of the régime is a function of its military success.

The last-named point can be quickly settled. One rule would be valid for all liberal-minded men but for the axiom that to have the right to appeal to democratic norms we must first abandon the right to apply them to Soviet affairs, and that is to refuse absolutely to recognize any relation between the human value of a régime and the military successes of its armies. If we are to argue from brilliant military exploits to the political wisdom of a State, from the strength of its battalions to the greatness of its people, then what régimes and what peoples merit higher praise than those of Hitler and the Mikado? If we are to make the merit of ideas depend on the fate of armies, then what civilization was ever more brilliant than that of the barbarian hordes which overran Europe?

How often have we heard the opinion that the Soviet soldiers would never have battled so courageously if they had not known that in doing so they were defending their own interests and not those of their exploiters? But the soldiers of Hitler were no less brave and capable. Did they therefore demonstrate that they, too, were defending a régime favourable to the interests of the people? The most brilliant military exploits in Russian history were accomplished under Suvarov, and all the warriors who fought so heroically under that great captain were serfs, oppressed and exploited by their masters like so much cattle. No, it is a sad but incontestable fact that any efficient military system, whether barbarian, feudal, bourgeois or Soviet, enhances the bravery and self-sacrifice of its troops no matter what the general situation of the people from whose ranks those troops are drawn.

Must we abandon the fruit of two centuries of humanist efforts to discredit the idols of militarism? Must we renounce all criticism designed to liberate the judgments of men from the criterion of force? Must we admit a resuscitation of the gladiatorial morale? No, let us not fear to proclaim once and for all that the thrilling entry of Marshal Zhukov into Berlin in May, 1945, leaves us absolutely cold when the fate of Russian mankind for a quarter of a century is under discussion. And now let us turn our attention to the question of the real merits of the Red Army.

Although the present book deals only secondarily with economic questions, the reader will meet with more than one indication of the muddle which prevails in Soviet industrial planning about which such marvels are related. All we have space for here is one or two examples taken at hazard from an avalanche of "self-criticism."

"Breakdowns literally paralyse the work of the rolling mills.

Mechanical defects happen constantly, and the result is continual interruptions of work. A total of between 30 per cent. and 40 per cent. of working time is lost in this fashion. Thus 500 working hours were lost in the rolling mills within the past seven months" (*Industria*, Moscow, August 26th, 1938).

The proportion of rejections is so great that a decree promulgated on July 10th, 1940, included the production of defective products amongst the "crimes against the State," and Article 2 of the Decree made it punishable by a term of imprisonment ranging from five to eight years. Commenting on this decree in its issue of July 1st, the *Pravda* complained bitterly of the terribly low quality of production in the mining and metallurgical industries. Many of the tractors produced under the direction of foreign engineers at the Nizhni-Novgorod factories, together with tanks for the Red Army, are not bad in quality, but at the first mishap their drivers leave them to rust in the fields until such time as an inspector discovers them and orders whatever spare part may be necessary. A bureaucratic sludge chokes all operations, and hundreds of tractors, etc., go under and are lost to production in the ever-widening morass.

Another important factor is the lamentable state of the roads, and this is a fact the régime has never made any attempt to conceal. In short, it was not so much the quantity, or even the quality, of the original production which caused the trouble and hampered the armaments of the Red Army, but the lack of a rational and economic system of utilization, hampered in its turn by the poor qualifications of its servants plus the paper barrage of its "organizers."

In his report to the United States Government on his ambassadorial mission, Mr. Davies declared that the Red Army was ready for action even in 1938. If that were true, how explain the resounding defeats it suffered during the war against Finland? Of course, the uncritical admirers of the Soviet régime have an explanation ready at once. According to them, the Red Army deliberately exposed itself to universal ridicule and contempt in order to deceive Hitler as to its real strength. But this explanation is asking us to believe that the Soviet Government was anxious to draw down the might of Hitler's army on itself, and deliberately manoeuvred to bring about that desirable consummation. This theory is evidently absurd and unworthy of serious attention, particularly as the Russians justified their alliance with the Nazis towards the democracies by the urgent need of delaying the German invasion as long as possible. It is really illuminating to observe that rather than admit even the slightest blemish in their Soviet idol, certain people will invent fantastic theories better suited to a work of fantasy than to cold reality.

The defenders of Stalin and his policy have found only two excuses for the Russo-German Pact concluded on the eve of the war, which, beyond all question, was the signal which let loose the Hitler hordes over Europe.

The first of these excuses is that the Soviet Union was double-crossed by the Western Powers, which, behind her back, were urging Hitler to slake his lust for foreign conquest at her expense. This accusation goes back to the old resentment of revolutionaries against the intervention armies of the international counter-revolution in the early days of the Russian Revolution. In reality, any objective study of international affairs shows that for a very long time now—to be precise, since the dispersal of the last Red wave which threatened Europe (the defeat of the German insurrection in October, 1923)—plans for armed intervention against the Soviet Union have survived only in a few unimportant circles of incorrigible and irresponsible reactionaries and are not shared by any of the big Powers.

Compelled to manipulate the details in order to justify and support their own prejudices, certain circles willingly ignore facts of primary importance. They refuse simply to accept them at their real and obvious value and, desiring to estimate the balance of forces, they do not even dream of relating them to the side to which the balance finally tipped. Now, after years of appeasement and timidity towards Hitler, one fact began to emerge indisputably, and by September, 1939, it was already quite clear what policy the allied Governments had definitely adopted: they sent their plenipotentiaries to Moscow with a view to concluding a military alliance. If the men in control of Allied policy were really still under the dominating influence of the anti-Soviet hostility of 1917-23, then their course was quite clear and their game won by the simplest possible move—namely, to give Germany a free hand in Poland so that she could roll up to the Soviet frontiers and be in a position to drive on into the Ukraine without loss of time.

But they did exactly the opposite. Belatedly no doubt, but by shedding their blood, France and Great Britain took up arms and fought against the German drive towards the east, and by so doing they created the diversion which permitted the Soviet Union to enjoy quite a long respite from war. Could there have been a more convincing demonstration of the fact that their foreign policy was not "above all" anti-Soviet?

The second excuse is that the Red Army was not ready in August, 1939, and "Moscow" therefore had to flatter the Nazi ogre in order to lull it into a false sense of security and gain absolutely necessary time. But if the aim of the Soviet Government was really only to temporise in order to gain time to prepare itself for the final battle against Hitler, what would have been easier, more

certain, or more unambiguous than for it to have taken the hand of friendship offered with the same end in mind by the democratic countries?

Now, even if the Red Army was not altogether so itching to be up and doing in 1938 as Davies has suggested, at least it was not so weak and ill-prepared that it did not represent, or, rather, could not have represented, a very appreciable accession to the anti-Fascist forces. Hitler had already written plainly in *Mein Kampf* that he would never commit the fault committed by the Imperial German Government in 1914 of simultaneously beginning a war on two fronts. Everything in fact suggests that if the Soviet Union had joined hands with the Allied Powers in August, 1939, Hitler would have drawn back, and the famous respite necessary for the acceleration of Russia's military preparations would have been obtained under much more favourable conditions. Certainly, Stalin was justified in hoping that he could also ward off the threat of war by his pact with Hitler, but only from the Soviet Union and at the cost of letting war loose on the rest of the world, whereas if he had formed a united front against Hitler with the Allied Powers the threat of war would have been warded off everywhere.

No, the monstrous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was not the result either of a desire for vengeance against non-existent anti-Soviet intrigues on the part of the democratic countries, or of a stratagem to gain time and be in a better position to help the democracies in their struggle against Hitler later. Only one explanation fits the facts, and a very simple explanation it is. Faced with an offer of an alliance from both camps, the Fascist and the democratic, each of which seemed to offer an equal chance of keeping the Soviet Union out of war, Stalin contemptuously dismissed all considerations of solidarity, doctrine or humanity, and consulted only naked self-interest. More and more haunted by the heritage of Czarism, the alliance with the Nazis offered him the one thing of which he had dreamed since he came to absolute power: the opportunity of territorial extension towards the west.

Let us observe at this point that had it been a question of any other government, this logical interpretation would have been pounced on at once by Marxists of all shades. However, the activities of the Kremlin seem to have something of the divine essence which raises them above all vulgar considerations of logical interpretation.

Or have they? Once again the course of events proved conclusively enough that Stalin is to be judged by the same standards as the rest of the world. One of the many revelations at the Nuremberg Trials showed that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was paralleled by a secret agreement in which the two partners agreed in detail

on the annexations they were mutually prepared to guarantee each other, and on the "zones of influence" each partner was to enjoy unhindered by the other. The complete text of this secret agreement was amongst the 260 documents found in the Wilhelmstrasse archives after the collapse of Germany and sensationally published by the U.S. Government on January 31st, 1948.

A clear light begins to illuminate the vexed affair. At a time when the logic of resistance to the Nazis demanded that Stalin should ally himself with the democratic countries, he did exactly the opposite: for the simple reason that these democratic countries proposed to respect the national sovereignties created in Europe after the First World War, so that if the Soviet Union joined them she could be quite certain that even in the event of victory she would not obtain even the smallest territorial aggrandisement. But with Hitler and Ribbentrop Stalin was bargaining with "realists." The reports of Ribbentrop in this respect reveal a depressing picture. From the moment the Russian and German negotiators came together they understood each other perfectly: you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. A very short time was sufficient to dissipate "unnecessary frictions," to quote the term used by Stalin, according to the evidence of Gauss at Nuremberg on March 25th, 1946. After that the negotiators got down to serious business: the joint partition of Poland; the invasion of Finland for the invasion of Belgium; the annexation of the Baltic countries for the annexation of Czechoslovakia; the exchange of confidential information; and so on.

Evidence is mounting up to show that Stalin was guided by territorial ambitions and not by any desire to join the democracies at a later date, when he would be better prepared. First of all, it was he who made the overtures to Hitler in the spring of 1939 and not the other way round. Secondly, the bargaining between the two dictators continued throughout the period of their alliance and turned the whole time with an almost caricatured indecency around the division of the spoils. The American White Book confirms the shocking fact revealed at Nuremberg that it was the excessive territorial appetite displayed by Molotov in connection with the projected carve-up of the British Empire which shook Hitler and brought him to his decision to turn against his erstwhile partner. And a final indication that Stalin allied himself with Hitler to realize ambitions commonly regarded as "sordid" by Socialism, and not in order to manœuvre secretly in the ultimate interests of democracy, is offered by the defeatist activity he ordered his Comintern followers to carry out to weaken the countries assailed by Hitler. At the very least he could have ordered his partisans in those countries to adopt a policy of "non-belligerence." Instead, throughout the first two years of the war his Comintern agents

concentrated their efforts on sapping the strength of the democratic countries, though the latter needed every reserve they could muster to contain the Nazi tidal wave.

In France the Communist leaders (for instance, Thorez) deserted rather than take their part in its defence, whilst the rank and file members did their best to undermine the fighting spirit of her soldiers and sabotage her war effort, and some of them were even taken in a direct attempt to assist the German enemy. The Swedish Communist leader Uhlitch publicly praised Hitler in the Press. In Great Britain the Communist leader Pollitt first called upon the workers to support the war effort against Nazi Germany and then, hearing the crack of the Moscow whip, hurriedly jumped back to the party line he had inadvertently abandoned and denounced the war against Nazi Germany as an imperialist war. In the United States Communists even organized anti-intervention demonstrations culminating in the well-known parade before the White House to persuade Roosevelt not to enter the war on the side of the Allies. The stab in the back delivered by the Communists in all the countries assailed by Nazi Germany was not in the least furtive, and it was officially defended and praised in all the Communist publications of the period. Does public opinion now propose to commit the unpardonable and irresponsible stupidity of forgetting it all? The defeatist game played by Moscow and its satellites everywhere might well have cost the world its freedom.

Alas! we are left with only one logical conclusion: if the primary cause of the recent terrible carnage was the lust of Hitler to dominate the world, then the secondary cause was the territorial cupidity of Stalin. Scores of millions of men—and women and children—were shot, bombed, burned, mutilated and starved, and hundreds of millions of men, women and children still suffer terrible privations in a devastated countryside, because Hitler wanted to divide up the world amongst his Germans and kill the Jews—but also because Stalin was anxious to extend the stronghold of his dictatorship.

There is no doubt, of course, that Stalin also gave some thought to the future prospects of his pact with Hitler, but in all probability he reckoned that the war would result in such a state of exhaustion in both warring camps that his 1939 annexations would not be seriously threatened. His calculation was false, and it cost the unfortunate Russian people the terrible German invasion of 1941-3. Thus material greed and lack of political foresight combined to produce the Russo-German Pact. In the upshot the Soviet Government once again survived the consequences of its errors by sacrificing its people in holocausts. Once again the old Stalin rises before us, and behind him eternal Russia.

Two years after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

the Nazi lightning-war technique was turned against the Soviet Union. The Russian armies streamed back in the utmost confusion, suffering military catastrophes which make the French military debacle appear almost a bagatelle. Within a short space of time they lost territory five times as great as the whole of France, and several millions of men. For any other country it would have been the end.

But once again the eternal, immovable colossus appears. The neglected condition of transport and communications, the sparsity of roads and the primitive state of the countryside hampered the offensive of the enemy almost more than the resistance of the Soviet forces. For modern warfare nothing is more favourable than the technical basis offered by a highly-developed modern industrial country. Everywhere he goes the invader is sure to find asphalt for his lorries, stations and tracks for his trains, telephones for his messages, petrol for his motors, buildings for his staffs, quarters for his troops, hospitals for his wounded, etc. The lack of all such things hampers professional warfare and facilitates the resistance of the inhabitants. The great open spaces of Russia, endless and mediæval, are an enemy more redoubtable for a motorized invader than the Russian Army itself. There is an analogous explanation for the successful resistance over a period of more than ten years offered by weak but immense China against small but powerful Japan. With this difference: there are no acolytes in Western Europe to burn incense to China's feats of arms and deduce from them that the Kuomintang is the best of parties in the best of all possible states.

Feeble from the point of view of military efficiency, the Red Army is redoubtable on account of its numbers. The ancient tradition of Russian military history, the waves of Suvarov, came into operation again. The first wave is dissipated altogether; the second breaks ineffectively; and the third rolls on and engulfs its objective. Faithful to her history and subordinate to her geography, Russia pays in men and defends herself in depth. We are no more justified in placing these trumps to the credit of the Soviet form of government than we should be if we placed the Channel to the credit of the British parliamentary régime, or the Atlantic to the credit of the American way of life. As far as governmental foresight and military preparation for the coming ordeal were concerned, none of these three countries was in any way superior to or more efficient than France, and put in her place, and with her limited resources, they would have gone under as rapidly as she did. One can say without any danger of exaggeration that Hitler lost the war because he underestimated the importance of two obstacles: the water of the English Channel and the immensity of the Russian steppes.

At the height of the Russian retreat, Allied aid arrived. According to an official United States Government report published on February 1st, 1946, U.S. deliveries to Russia under Lease-Lend alone, not including direct purchase, totalled 2.4 milliard pounds, whilst similar deliveries from Great Britain totalled, according to Attlee's statement in the House of Commons on April 15th, 1946, 500 million pounds. These figures give some indication of the crucial role played by Allied aid in Russia's resistance to the Nazi invasion. Further evidence, if any is necessary, is furnished by a telegram intercepted by the Italians and revealed in the diary of Count Ciano. The U.S. Military Attaché in Moscow sent off that telegram to inform his Government in Washington in February, 1942, that unless the armaments and materials promised by the Allies arrived very quickly the Soviet Government would consider capitulation on the best terms it could get. And whilst British convoys braved the icy storms of the Arctic, and the dangers from submarines and icebergs, to carry aid to Russia, the latter's Government launched a world-wide campaign against the Allied Powers for their alleged delay in opening the "Second Front."

Even if we were to accept that charge as justified, it would not be so grave as the refusal of the Russians to provide the Allies with a second front in 1939, at a time when the fate of Europe hung in the balance and the Russians could have tipped the scales to safety. And if the Russians consider themselves to have been justified then on account of their unreadiness to sustain a war on their own frontiers, then in 1943 the Allied Powers were equally justified, for they were no more ready at that time to carry out a much more difficult military operation—namely, a landing on a shore occupied by an enemy prepared to resist them.

However, in fact it is just not true that the Allied Powers refused to open up a second front. The utmost that can be said is that for a year they did not give battle on that front because the date of their landing was retarded precisely by the massive deliveries of war materials to aid the Russians in their struggle. Nevertheless, the second front did exist and pinned down large German forces, thereby rendering great indirect assistance to the Russians. From Norway to North Africa the menace of the Allied power kept 150 German divisions on a war footing, fully armed and prepared for action at any moment, with their reserves behind them, whilst the vast labour of building "the Atlantic Wall" against the threatened—and coming—invasion exhausted a good third of the total productive capacity of Hitler. And in the air, in which the battle against the Nazi power never ceased, Allied squadrons steadily pounded away at the German Hinterland, doing a vast amount of damage, whilst on sea and in the air British naval forces and their air arm decimated Germany's submarine fleet. All in all, the naked

truth is that Soviet Russia never had to face more than half the full force of Nazi Germany—thanks to the Allied Powers.

And a final consideration: there was no reciprocity at all as far as Soviet Russia was concerned; for instance, in the grave period of the war against Japan she refused to come in on the side of the Allied Powers, and she waited until Japan had been brought to her knees before she came in. If Soviet Russia "saved the world," it was on one front only. The Anglo-American forces saved it on two.

In addition to the assistance derived by Soviet Russia from natural circumstances and from the generous aid accorded to her in exceptionally difficult circumstances by her Western Allies, there were certainly factors of a military nature which it would be equally wrong to deny, ignore or attempt to miraculize.

First of all there was the successful removal of war industries from the threatened areas to safe locations in the Urals and other places, and, more generally, considerable success in the acceleration of war production. In Russia, as in all the Allied countries, the essential part of the military preparations, as enormous as they were, had to be made during the war itself in the face of great adversity.

And then there was the great self-sacrifice and indomitable courage of the Russian people. The Russian has always made an excellent soldier. Napoleon discovered it to his cost. The race was always vigorous and intellectually agile. During the recent war the Russians surpassed themselves in brave and dogged resistance. We can afford to underline this heroism without in the least depreciating the equally real heroism and endurance of the men who fought in the fields of Europe, on the scorching deserts of North Africa, in the icy fiords of Norway, and through the storm of steel which breached the Siegfried Line.

And then, and above all, there was another determining factor which operated in Soviet Russia as in Great Britain: the ruling class was determined to fight, and to make its people fight. In France, on the other hand, many highly-placed personages, including high officers, leading industrialists, influential politicians and so on, went into the war against their will. In their heart of hearts, they preferred the Fascist system to the democratic agitation of the Front Populaire and the resultant tumult and disorder. There was nothing of that sort where the Russian bureaucracy was concerned, whether its members were directors of *kolkhozes* or of factories, all-powerful secretaries of the Communist Party, Marxist-Stalinist colonels of the Red Army, or privileged officers of the Secret Police. Opposed to them were the insolent and arrogant masters of the Nazi Party supported by a reactionary bourgeoisie. Between these two camps, as is usual when thieves fall out, there was nothing but

uncompromising hatred, and no solution but a war to the death. For the Soviet régime the war against Nazi Germany was a matter of survival, for the régime and for all the classes linked to Stalin by chains of gold or the ball and chain. Despite all the sufferings and privations which war brings with it, a people is never so easily manageable as it is in time of war. When the officers are determined, all armies are heroic. The Soviet cadres held, and the Russian people went to war.

These were the factors which in our opinion finally led to the great change which came over the fortunes of war in the east at Stalingrad. To the extent that they accumulated trumps in the Russian game, the Allied forces were enabled to win tricks in the German game. The resistance, silent, but none the less efficacious, which went on throughout the whole of occupied Europe accelerated the decline of the Nazi forces. Strong in cadres, strong in spirit, and, above all, strong in numbers (after suffering 3 or 4 million casualties there were always 3 or 4 million fresh reinforcements to take their place at the front), the Red Army was at last ready, and Stalin let loose the avalanche.

And now, let Solomon pronounce judgment from his tomb: Who saved whom? Who merits greater praise than whom? And in the last resort, do all those governments which won the war instead of preventing it, which could destroy Nazism only at the cost of millions of lives, do they really merit any praise at all?

PROPAGANDA

"Truth sometimes makes holes, but the lie always makes ruins."

George Sand.

NOWHERE DOES OUR vocabulary exercise such a retarding influence on thought as in the social sciences. Nowhere does our poverty of language, squeezing several senses into the same word, have such deleterious consequences as here.

Originally the word "propaganda" meant every effort—no matter of what nature—expended to spread an opinion and to gain the consent of men's minds. But modern excess has communicated a disparaging meaning to the word, a suggestion that it refers to the exclusive diffusion of one view to the detriment of all others, a suggestion of intellectual fraud, the use of emotional urges to enforce conviction. It is in this sense that we are now compelled to study propaganda. Let us therefore reserve the word to that sense and use another word, "diffusion," or what you will, when we mean a simple, non-fraudulent attempt to spread ideas.

The Anatomy of Propaganda

Since the existence of men who eat, institutions have had police to control them physically. And since the existence of men who think, institutions have made propaganda to tame their minds. Ought they not to forbid men to dream that one day there will be a society on this earth in which men's bodies will be free and their minds at liberty to know everything without let or hindrance?

From the moment of its first flight to the stars, the capacity to think has always appeared particularly dangerous. Knowing nothing of the satiety of physical satisfaction; enjoying its liberty only in unrest; escaping prison; surviving death; from age to age it has carried forward the infinite universe of doubt. But none of the powers at whose very vitals it gnaws can do without it wholly, or dare insult its dignity openly. The more science progresses and the more governments depend on opinion, the greater become the need to reflect, the possibilities to understand and the opportunities to criticize. In vain the police have perfected their power; they over-exert themselves to the point of exhaustion when they seek to pit their cunning against the power of thought.

Repression may remove the danger, but it cannot remove the cause. "Prevention is better than cure." Tyrants have thus been compelled to resist the power of thought with a technique made to measure, capable of arresting it when it begins to develop, of diverting it when it advances, of falsifying it when it begins to inquire, of operating the prophylactics of discontent by suggested satisfactions, of cunningly exploiting science to bind man's conscience, and of using man's conscience to intimidate science. That supreme technique is propaganda.

Are subversive systems guilty of the same crime against human thought? It cannot be denied that in the beginning at least they envisage a re-awakening of the critical faculties and not their deadening. But hardly does an oppositional party gain sufficient influence to become a deciding factor in the life of man than we find it working to hamper the intellectual development it previously encouraged. It is precisely at this point that such a party begins to intoxicate itself with its own propaganda. Once transformed into a dogma, its doctrine is no longer an innovation except in the eyes of a police who continue to persecute it by force of habit. But in relation to knowledge it has become an instrument of conservation, and it will exercise a tyranny over mankind as soon as it comes to power.

Thus, despite the contradiction in programmes, propaganda assumes the same essential function of suppressing thought whether it is used by a government or an opposition. But, the latter usually pleads: "the ignorance of our listeners and the trickery of our opponents oblige us, willy-nilly, to indulge in simplifications, generalizations and artifices, because the propaganda of our reactionary opponents burdens the minds of the masses like a paralysis and they can be delivered only by the traumatic stimulus of counter-propaganda."

Perhaps. . . . Let us therefore recognize that Progress is the victim of Fate and redouble our efforts to secure her release. But if the original prophylactic injection of counter-propaganda is not followed by vigorous education, and if instead that counter-propaganda becomes, as in the Soviet Union, more and more distorted and distorting instead of gradually leaving the stage to a serene development of ideas and facts, then we are not prepared to admit even a single extenuating circumstance.

Like the complacency of the adult when it strives to thwart the curiosity of the child, propaganda begins with the lie. In the beginning it is the lie pure and simple: prices are falling whilst in reality they are rising; the workers are living in abundance whilst in reality they are starving. But more refined forms of the lie are also at work: the half-truth, the cunning omission of an essential factor. Wages are rising, but no mention is made of the fact that

the cost of living is rising still more. Such and such a canal is the longest in the world, but no mention is made of the fact that it is both very narrow and very shallow. The collectivization of agriculture is making great progress, but no mention is made of the fact that there is less and less to eat in consequence. And then there is the lie by misplaced stress. The front page is devoted to the American economic crisis or to the killings of Hitler, and on the back page in small type is a reference to the wholesale "purgings" in Moscow, or to sentences of death passed on starving gleaners. Or the venality of an enemy is pilloried in large type and banner headlines, whilst the peccadilloes of a party treasurer are noted in an obscure corner in small type. The variations on the theme are as extensive and complicated as truth itself, and that is saying not a little.

Propaganda has still subtler measures to hamstring minds capable of penetrating through the swirling fog of lies. The first flashes of insight which come to budding criticism are blanketed by a rigid schematism whose ponderous complacency effectively discourages all further inquiry. Instead of modelling theory on experience, schematism of this kind forces experience into the mould of theory. Instead of renewing its hypothesis in the light of developments, it crushes facts into the rigid framework of its first hypothesis. It turns a method of investigation into an unalterable creed, and a profound thought into a sacred and inviolable axiom. By compressing analysis into a magic "sesame," by forcing the entire universe into the iron bands of an exclusive formula, the one-time innovator and revolutionary pollutes the living blood which gave him life and reassures those who for a while were seriously disquieted. It is then amidst their warm applause that he plunges from modest approximation to pretentious certainty, from eager research to complacent repetition, from living thought to dead formulas. The degradation of Marxism into Soviet Marxism is one of the most terrible examples of what such schematism can accomplish in the way of stifling intellectual life.

Simplification, uniformity and condensation culminate in the slogan. And from the slogan it is but a step to the symbol, and then propaganda is enriched with a new and formidable trump. Since all problems can be solved with the same key, why bother with long and difficult demonstrations? The image of the key, the symbol of the key, is sufficient to compel conviction. The door is opened wide to the long procession of all-powerful signs and symbols from the days of man's ancestral servitude, permitting him to slake some of his most obdurate passions: to recognize, rally and exalt himself in surrendering himself.

The sickle and the hammer join with the Hakenkreuz in reviving the totem. It is very tempting and quite poetic to represent an ideal in a design, a material or a melody. Unfortunately at the

same time a sort of conditional reflex opens the door to usurpation: the masses need only see the design, wave the flag and sing the melody to believe the ideal already realized.

Symbolism follows simple and tragic laws. Like schematism, of which it is the emotional expression, it wants to triumph, it desires to be exclusive, it demands repetition. If surrender to a symbol does not suggest salvation, if it is not a triumph renewed again and again to the point of stupefaction, and if the schema, far from exercising a jealous tyranny over men's minds, are present in abundance and available at discretion, then propaganda will not stifle thought.

A further and still more powerful circumstance is that political symbolism flourishes only amongst the mob. The gregarious spirit owes part of its attraction to desirable and admirable tendencies. Man from birth longs for the features of his fellow man. He knows that he is weak, but he desires to be strong; and he can find a consoling confirmation of his worth only in the agreement of his fellow men. But it is not the ponderous logic of Kant or the complex argument of Marx's three-decker *Capital* which create—and still less maintain—that fervent communion of tens of thousands of enthusiastic demonstrators in the great meeting places of the world. Something simpler is required to let loose the simultaneous enthusiasm of great masses of people; something simple but dazzling, something charged with emotion and not argument—in short, a symbol. And it is here that propaganda rises to the summit of its power, and assent is carried to the verge of hysteria.

The emblem communicates its own narrow and primitive inflexibility to the masses it enthuses. By stifling the human spirit, the human heart is hardened. Man, amongst tens of thousands of his kind deprived of all vital thought by propaganda, now loses all respect for human life. Violence surges forward to occupy the vacant space and grins derisively 10,000 times around him. It was the pride of all libertarian doctrines to place the responsibility for evil on institutions and not on man. But an institution, a régime, is not an easy symbol, and therefore the régime is represented in a man, against whom the flood of hatred accumulated beneath the surface by the barbarous life of societies can then pour out in one magnificent torrent. "The basely envious proletarian" is the scapegoat for capitalist vengeance; the "pot-bellied exploiter" is the symbolic object of Socialist resentment; the "infernal Jew" serves the hatred of the Fascist; the "Trotskyite wrecker" canalizes the rage of the Stalinist.

Propaganda is not content to replace the sober condemnation of a régime by the morbid aggression of the individual; it exploits both forgetfulness and circumstance to substitute the intoxicating satisfaction of instant success for profound suffering. It does not

matter in the least that such success is nothing but a collective hallucination. We are in the thick of pathological reactions.

The Soviet Press

Ten thousand daily newspapers appear in eighty-three different languages and in editions totalling 38 million copies (*Correspondance Internationale*, November 2nd, 1937). This tremendous *pièce de résistance* is garnished by a host of periodicals, and a still greater host of "wall-newspapers," which exist wherever there is a wall and an organizing secretary to hand. And in addition there is a vast and steady flood of cheap pamphlets. Stalin's report to the Eighth Soviet Congress was sold in 62 million copies in a country which has 65 million inhabitants able to read. One of his speeches on Stakhanovism was "ordered" in 5 million copies (*Humanité*, November 27th, 1935). Within a few months, the Stakhanovite movement produced a literature totalling 1,200 books and pamphlets printed in 29 million copies (*Correspondance Internationale*, November 2nd, 1937). The collected speeches of Stalin have been published in editions totalling 115 million copies, as against 27 million copies of the works of Lenin, and 2 million copies of Marx's *Capital*.

No single newspaper, no magazine or review, no "wall-newspaper" and no single pamphlet is ever published in the Soviet Union by an independent man or by a group of independent men. Everything is published by official organizations, and journalists are mere functionaries. The system of registered subscriptions is very widespread, and often obligatory. For instance, *Pravda*, central organ of the Russian Communist Party, has no less than 1,900,000 registered subscribers; *Izvestia*, official mouthpiece of the Soviet Government, has 1,600,000; *Krestianskaya Gazieta*, journal of the peasants, 1,750,000; the organs of the Rayon Committees 11,000,000; and so on. We have no figures relating to *Trud*, central organ of the Soviet Labour Unions, or to *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, central organ of the Communist Youth Association, or *Za Industrialisatzu*, the journal for industrialization, and so on, but they are probably much along the same lines. The weekly publication *War and the Workers*, issued during the war, had a circulation of 2,500,000 copies.

Despite all we have been told to the contrary, it is a fact that very many adult Russians cannot read, and to make sure that these people get their daily dose "the labour-union committees in the factories . . . appoint members to see to it that the newspapers are read during the break in the Red Corner" (Gautier, II, p. 134). The *politotdels* organize similar readings in the *kolkhozes* for peasants who cannot read. To check up on whether the population properly assimilates the campaigns launched by the Press, special groups of propagandists are constantly touring the country.

"The active preparation for the elections to the Supreme Soviet has begun in the *kolkhozes* and *sovkhoses* in the province of Kalinin. More than 20,000 propagandists are at work amongst the *kolkhozes* of that province" (*Visty S. Rodiny*, October 31st, 1945).

"8,000 propagandists are at work in the campaigns being conducted in the province of Nikolaiev" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, October 31st, 1945).

The monotony and servility of the Soviet Press is excellently illustrated by the following extracts from various criticisms of the film, *A Great Life*. The *Pravda*, centre and fount of the General Line, pronounces its verdict:

"This film does not respect Soviet reality. . . . It is accompanied by songs in poor taste stamped with the melancholy of the cabaret" (the critic Soutchkov on September 11th, 1946).

Off we go, all the 10,000 of us:

"The film introduces trivial romances and songs stamped with the pessimism and melancholy of the cabaret foreign to our Soviet public" (the critic Frolov in *Trud*, September 18th, 1946).

"The songs of the composer Bogoslovsky introduced into the film are stamped with the melancholy of the cabaret, and their inspiration is foreign to the citizens of the Soviet Union" (editorial in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* on September 25th, 1946).

"The producer Louker has introduced scenes saturated with pessimism and the melancholy of the cabaret foreign to Soviet citizens" (*Izvestia*, September 13th, 1946).

Who'd be in poor Louker's shoes?

The primary task of the Soviet Press is to praise in full columns the inspired leadership of the great Father of the Peoples, to brag to the utmost about all aspects of life in the Soviet paradise, and to pursue the hidden enemies of the people. Its usefulness is decisive when those on high intend to introduce "a change of policy." The newspapers then begin to print petitions from millions and millions of workers and peasants, women, children and greybeards, crying out for just the changes those on high have in mind. And after about ten days of anxious praying, the Father of the Peoples condescendingly agrees to reinforce labour discipline in the factories and in the *kolkhozes*.

Despots have always bad consciences and they are avid of anything calculated to appease their secret twinges. By a piece of stage management inherited from the days of ancient Rome, they love to camouflage their crimes as benefits bestowed at the desire of their victims. It was the Greek Callicrates who begged the Roman Senate to be severe with the Greeks. It was the Czech President Hacha who appealed to the Nazi Army to torture the Czechs. It is Soviet mothers-to-be who solicit the favour of being deprived of a month of their pregnancy leave. And it is always the

Soviet workers who appeal desperately for an aggravation of labour legislation. These comedies are the unwilling homage dictatorial vice pays to democratic virtue. As the sun dominates the clouds, so liberty dominates tyrants. From them to her, the insults and the emancipated pretensions resemble the vociferations of the gutter-snipe caught in the act. As soon as they think themselves out of sight, they hasten to place themselves under the protecting wing of the great idea they pretend to despise, and strive to legitimize their government by the consent of the governed.

The Soviet Press also simultaneously performs a number of other servile functions. It whips the masses into a delirium of industrialization; it praises the flunkies still in office, and denigrates those who have fallen from grace; it invents sabotage to hound it down remorselessly; it deadens the brains of its readers by a continual re-hash of slogans, resolutions, communiqués, and by reports of meetings at which the slogans, resolutions, communiqués and reports of the Press are re-hashed indefinitely. That in defiance of all information the Soviet Press is exclusively an instrument of propaganda is illustrated by the following quotation:

"The new electoral system will be a test, a most serious examination for the Press. It would be a shame for the Press if hostile persons were elected anywhere. 'It would mean,' says Comrade Stalin, 'that our propaganda work was badly managed from the start.' It would also mean that in the constituency or district in which a person hostile to the Soviet power succeeded in getting elected the local newspaper was unworthy of the title of Soviet agitator. . . . The instructions of the leader of all the peoples, the instructions of Comrade Stalin, are the foundation of all foundations, the guiding star of all our newspapers" (*Pravda*, December 13th, 1936).

How Propagandists are made

"The measures to be taken to improve propaganda and the Marxist-Leninist education of the cadres have often been examined by the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevist) Party in the presence of propagandists from various district organizations of the party. In this respect the appearance of *The History of the Communist (Bolshevist) Party of the Soviet Union* in September, 1937, has been taken into account. It was agreed that the appearance of this history marked the debut of a new period of élan in Marxist-Leninist propaganda in our country" (Stalin, *Report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party*).

The quotation illustrates the importance of this manual in the determined efforts of Stalin to teach his subjects history after his own heart.

According to figures given by Kaganovitch, in August, 1933, there were 130,000 propagandists—that is to say, five times as many as in 1928 (Kaganovitch, report to the Eighteenth Party Congress on organizational questions, 1934). They had all been through a course at the Institute of Red Professors, the Communist universities or the propagandist schools of the party or the Soviets. Kaganovitch also mentions the existence of propagandist training courses by post and wireless. The Soviet régime pays very close attention at all stages of its hierarchy to the training of such men and women.

"The work of propaganda must be well organized; it must be systematic and daily. . . . We must get rid of the wrong idea that propaganda can be left to Communists ill-prepared to carry on such work" (*Pravda*, December 27th, 1936).

Such propagandists are chosen from amongst the citizens most active in practical affairs and most passive intellectually. Despite the great variety of schools which exist to train them their education is poor. It is quite enough for them to learn by heart the contents of the famous official *Memoranda for Speakers* issued to them regularly.

"For the Moscow District alone these *Memoranda* are issued two or three times a month in 135,000 copies. They deal with three or four subjects for discussion, and they set out in detail whatever is to be said on this, that or the other question, and how it should be said. The typographical set-up is designed to facilitate rapid reference to any part of the text" (Yvon, p. 104).

The propagandist preferably wears a worker's jacket and a cap, and if he can keep his hands calloused so much the better. Tourists on their travels are astounded to meet apparently ordinary workers who discuss the works of Barbusse, the world crisis, the working-class movement in India, or the internal antagonisms of the Balkan *entente*.

The *Memoranda* are often quite skilfully prepared, and their most effective theme is the facile denigration of capitalism. The Bolsheviks usually abide by the old law of least resistance: it is much easier to discredit the critic than to refute his criticism.

Here is a very popular effort which has more effect on Russian audiences than any amount of Leninist argumentation. Scene; any bourgeois country:

Little Girl: "Mother, I am cold. Why don't you light the fire?"

Mother: "Because I haven't any coal, dear."

Little Girl: "But why haven't we any coal?"

Mother: "Because your father is no longer working in the mine."

Little Girl: "Why isn't father working in the mine any longer?"

Mother: "Because there's too much coal already."

The development of the theme is impeccable, and that and

similar examples do not a little to convince the Russian that after all life is even more absurd in bourgeois countries than it is in his own.

Propaganda Meetings

As we have seen, the chief function of propaganda is to gather as many enthusiastic people as possible around a symbol. The public of the western world were quite accustomed to the ostentation and delirium of enormous gatherings organized to demonstrate the passionate attachment of the masses in Germany and Italy to their tyrants. The democracies also know the value of processions, bands and banners, platforms, illuminated symbols, slogans rhythmically shouted by serried fanatics, chants which move masses of men as the storm moves the trees of the forest, the sudden silences broken by a burst of applause. But probably less known to our readers is the use made by the propaganda machine of the "rank and file" meetings of the great Soviet organizations. It is here that the experience of the Bolsheviks as speakers, agitators and motion manipulators finds its most fertile field.

The "speaker," invariably appointed by the centre, broaches whatever question may be down for "discussion." His report on the subject always lasts from one half to two-thirds the time allotted to the meeting. The audience take no part in the meeting except to ask "questions," which have usually been sent in in writing beforehand to the committee. Thus this latter usually knows in advance who is going to ask a question and what its tendency will be. And, incidentally, not many people are able to put down their objections in a few lines. In practice only the house-trained collaborators get up and say their previously prepared pieces, which are either in fulsome support of whatever the speaker has said, or are criticisms which can be brilliantly disposed of by the speaker. Usually the man who rises informs everyone enthusiastically that after having listened to the splendid report of Comrade So-and-So he understands it all excellently, and has now emerged from the ignorant obscurity in which he previously vegetated: "Now I see. . . . Now I know. . . . Now I believe. . . . Now I can see my error."

The list of officials to be elected is almost invariably prepared in advance and proposed by the officials of the committee already in office. A slight refinement of this direct method is to have certain collaborators in the audience to shout out names "spontaneously from the body of the meeting." The rare fools and innocents who vote against the candidates proposed must explain their reasons publicly. Those present—and in particular those absent—are carefully listed. All in all, the significance of these electoral comedies is less to preserve some vestige of democratic custom than to permit

the Secret Police to get a line on "the hot-heads," of whom there are always a number in any régime.

From Dawn to Sunset; from the Caucasus to the Pole

Silence in the Soviet Union is no less a crime than open opposition. In 1929, for instance, Bucharin was charged with "the deviation of silence." Only loud and unmistakable approval enthusiastically repeated in season and out of season can slake the appetite of the dictator. Thus it is not surprising to find that leisure without propaganda is considered as "a petty-bourgeois and counter-revolutionary conception of leisure." The following are a few examples of the proletarian conception of leisure in the Soviet Union as provided for us by Professor Jean Pons, a Stalinist tourist:

"Propaganda is not forgotten in the Park of Rest and Culture. Immense hoardings show us the progress of the Five-Year Plan or the spread of the Stakhanovite movement. . . . There are portraits of the best Stakhanovites magnified to an enormous size, as also are pictures of Stalin, Molotov and Kirov. . . . Propaganda in favour of the new Constitution occupies a great space. Red flags flutter in the wind from great wooden arches. The inscriptions tell us the significance of the new law, the most democratic in the world" (Professor Jean Pons, *Journées soviétiques*, Maison de la Culture, Rabat, 1937, p. 104).

Trud of May 30th, 1934, approvingly reports a punishment meted out to a director of such a park of recreation and culture:

"... for not having made a serious propaganda effort in favour of the decisions of the Seventeenth Party Congress by means of discussions, lectures, chats, posters, etc., in connection with the celebrations."

Even working hours include leisure time, if only for a minute or two occasionally. A worker turns his head to stare at nothing and dream, or he goes over to make some entirely unnecessary adjustment to a machine, or to fetch a tool. Such minutes must not be lost to Stalin:

"All factory buildings are decorated with red flags and red bunting. . . . Immense portraits occupy the space of whole walls. . . . Great red streamers are covered with inscriptions and slogans from the speeches and works of revolutionary leaders" (Professor Jean Pons, *ibid.*, p. 221).

And if a worker proposes to rest and recuperate in his home, then Stalin is there too. Thanks to the wireless. Peasants who possess no cows of their own are collected to listen to the communal wireless set; the turn of a button brings them the announcement of innumerable fat cows, mingled with the feeble eloquence of Stalin. Take a walk in the streets to ogle the girls. Stalin is there.

Look casually to the left, and there he is eyeing you sternly up and down as he thunders an indictment of this, that or the other Fascist beast. Look away to the right, and this time he smiles at you paternally in the middle of a campaign against abortion and for full quivers in the Soviet Eden. Look into the air and you find his latest slogan in neon lights whilst stumbling over stones, cunningly arranged according to the diagram he has just drawn of the increase of leisure enjoyed by the worker in the Soviet Union. Or distractedly pick a posy for your best girl, but be careful you don't destroy his nose, for there he is in flowers at your feet. Go on your way humming a pleasant and debonair tune of other days and before long loud-speakers fixed to lamp-posts will blare out the *Internationale*, after which you will be regaled with communiqués indubitably "historic": "Assassination of workers in Greece. . . . Shock Brigades in the Don take a solemn oath. . . . Volunteers wanted to gather the beet harvest. . . . A nest of wreckers discovered in the Urals."

All tourists mention this unfortunate invention of Mr. Edison which is used in the Soviet Union "to pour a ceaseless flood of eloquence on the passers-by." The French public have been privileged to see a film in which the heroine suddenly discovers her vocation as a Bolshevik teacher after an appeal on one of these urban loud-speakers; she suddenly drops the arm of her boy friend, and dashes off to throw herself into the class struggle several thousand miles away.

But perhaps one can get away from Stalin in intimate communion with art in a museum or picture gallery—for instance, the famous Hermitage in Leningrad?

" . . . The pictures and the works of art are grouped in epochs and accompanied by revolutionary explanations. Added to these written explanations are the oral explanations of official guides more expert at Communism than art" (Yvon Delbos, *L'expérience rouge*, Paris, 1931, p. 179).

"The guides do not say: 'The pictures in this gallery are the work of artists for whom colour . . . ' but 'The pictures in this gallery are of an epoch when the bourgeoisie . . . '" (Henri Membré, p. 91).

Hundreds of thousands of peasants were invited for five days to the agricultural exhibition in Moscow in 1939. There was an aim behind such generosity, for as soon as they got off the train batches of them were taken over by the travel agency of the Moscow party and treated to excursions on the theme: "From capitalist Moscow to Socialist Moscow."

"The men and women of the *kolkhozes* who will be in Moscow during the exhibition are considered by us as an army of Bolshevik propagandists. We must arm them politically for their future

activities in the village. It is to be hoped that the Bolsheviks of Moscow are fully aware of the importance of their task" (*Pravda*, August 2nd, 1939).

Too Much of One Thing, Good for Nothing

Constant repetition, a monotonous chant, a continuous bombardment of the eye and the ear do not always increase and hold the interest; on the contrary, they tend to somnolence, like counting sheep jumping over a gate.

"A propagandist has just delivered a speech on the fascinating and burning theme of Stalin's Constitution.

"'Have you all understood? Are there any questions?'

"Silence. To judge by the mournful visages all around, the members of the *kolkhoze* have understood nothing at all. . . . The orator begins to speak again, but no one is listening to him; they have all gone to sleep" (*Pravda*, December 17th, 1936).

Barbey d'Aurevilly was once reproached for having criticized a piece through which he had in fact slept. He replied to his accuser: "But, my dear sir, sleep is also an opinion." The members of the *kolkhozes* are perhaps not quite so discreet, but their reaction is equally significant. Another propagandist, having poured out all his oratorical talent in support of the Constitution—

" . . . inquired whether anyone had a question to ask him. After a long silence, the voice of a woman was heard at last: 'Why aren't there any galoshes in the shops?' " (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, November 27th, 1936).

Very often the propagandists are severely taken to task:

"The propagandist Gamkrelidze spoke to a meeting on the electoral law. . . . Methodically, paragraph by paragraph, he read out a sixth of the electoral regulations, and from time to time he asks: 'Do you all understand?' And a chorus replies, 'Yes.' And so it goes on to the end."

And the *Pravda* of November 30th, 1945, which reports the affair, waxes indignant at the lack of professional conscience shown by this unfortunate propagandist, who "failed to understand the vital significance of this majestic document."

The *Molodaya Guardia* of November, 1936, denounces "the brutal tone of propagandists, the constantly repeated phrases, the tiresome meetings which send audiences hurrying away." Whilst the *Pravda* of December 14th, 1936, has an even graver reproach to make:

"What does the agitator know of his audience? Does he know their political ideas? Does he know their lives? Does he know which of them carry out the labour plan properly?"

And, in fact, such meetings are organized as much to sound the opinions of the audiences and spy on suspects as to propagate the

latest slogans. It is the job of the propagandist to discover the inquiring, critical and independent minds amongst his audience, to set traps for them and turn them over to the Secret Police. The *Pravda* of December 14th, 1936, tells us as much:

"There are perhaps a number of sectarians in the workshop. *They do not come to the meetings.* They keep themselves aloof from all the affairs of the factory. The party representative should make it his business to be well informed about them."

The grotesque treads closely on the heels of the tragic in this sphere, when they do not go arm in arm. Consider the unfortunate manager of a Soviet restaurant who presented his customers with a menu one of whose items read: "*Soupe aux choux paresseuse.*" A vigilant propagandist on reading the menu found that it affected not only his salivary glands, but his Stalinist liver, and rushed off to denounce "this cunning counter-revolutionary." For as the *Izvestia* of February 8th, 1938, points out:

"The term *paresseuse* (lazy) can only be a special form of anti-soviet propaganda designed to support the perfidious work of the class enemies who seek to disorganize the movement of the Stakhanovites and the Shock Brigaders."

Soviet Propaganda and the Outside World

The relations of Soviet propaganda and the outside world are simple and invariable. Not even the slightest vestige of truth concerning the outside world is ever permitted to enter into the Soviet Union, whilst the outside world is dazzled with a pyrotechnical display of Soviet propaganda artifices.

Charles Vildrac, who is a sympathizer with the Soviet Union, agrees that "no newspaper of any sort can be sent [from abroad] to any Soviet citizen" (Vildrac, p. 243). Any Soviet citizen who maintains a correspondence with anyone abroad soon finds himself the object of very close scrutiny by the Secret Police. And all witnesses are in agreement concerning the horror of the ordinary Russian citizen if any tourist attempts to stop him on the street and engage him in conversation, or knocks at his door. As often as not as soon as the tourist has gone on his way the unfortunate Russian is subject to the attentions of a Secret Service man in mufti.

Whilst the entry of foreign news into the Soviet Union is rigidly prevented by a *cordon sanitaire* erected around its citizens, the exportation of news concerning the Soviet Union is closely controlled by the Press censorship. The combination of the two forms the notorious "Iron Curtain."

"No Press telegram can enter or leave Russia or the annexed territories without first being meticulously scrutinized by the censorship" (Associated Press, February 7th, 1946).

"Foreign correspondents in Moscow . . . are not allowed to see their telegrams after they have been censored. They are left in ignorance as to what has been cut out or altered in their original text, and they do not know when their despatches are sent. They are not given the chance to protest against the changes made by the censorship, or to withdraw their despatches if in their opinion the changes made by the censorship have fundamentally affected their original text" (Reuters, March 9th, 1946).

The freedom accorded to foreign correspondents whilst the Meeting of the Big Four took place in Moscow (which was in any case strictly confined to diplomatic news) was cancelled so suddenly as soon as the conference was at an end that the Associated Press did not even have time to send a telegram announcing the re-establishment of the censorship.

Free from all control, the Soviet Government engages in an extravagant reconstruction of the capitalist world and treats Soviet public opinion to a series of pictures of utter desolation in order to enhance its passivity. What reason has the ordinary Russian citizen to complain of his own truly miserable lot when he is convinced that in the capitalist countries his like fall dead of hunger on the streets "without anyone bothering to remove the corpses"? The complete ignorance now suffered by the Russians concerning the real conditions of life in five-sixths of the world is a characteristic of life in the Soviet Union about which all witnesses are in agreement.

"Stuffed up with official propaganda, these unfortunates are sincerely moved by the fate of the working-class in the rest of the world, but if they could really see how they lived they would regard them as nothing short of rich *boyars*. I looked at their worm-eaten floorboards, their palliasses and their dirty belongings.

" 'I have never seen workmen lodged in dormitories in France,' I said. At least they have a room to themselves.

" 'You mean the engineers. . . .'

" 'They also have beds and bed-linen, chairs, wardrobes, good clothes and even bicycles.'

"They no longer attempted to suppress their ironical smiles" (Fleury, p. 81).

"A foreman declared that the Bois de Boulogne was reserved for fashionable Parisians, and that workers were not permitted to enter" (Dorgelès, p. 106).

Kléber Legay reports that Soviet miners do not doubt for a moment that the wives of French miners all have to be prostitutes, obliged to sell themselves to the mineowners.

"They smiled sceptically when I told them that Paris, too, had an underground railway" (Gide, II, p. 14).

The degree of falsification is no less enormous when the Soviet

Union is shown to the outside world. We know the publicity tours of the Intourist, the model factories, the Potemkin villages, the spectacular constructions with which tourists are dazzled. The allegedly defunct Communist International, now in part openly restored in the Cominform, with its sixty-three national sections, its innumerable auxiliary organizations, its millions of pamphlets and its millions of leaflets, is nothing but a great publicity machine for turning Soviet reality into a Socialist mirage in the eyes of the rest of the world.

The First Soviet Commandment

Towards his end, so lucid and in some respects so tragic, Lenin often denounced the lies and boastfulness of Communist officials.

"Every day we hear, and I hear in particular because of my office, so many mawkish Communist lies that it makes you feel sick, terribly sick sometimes" (Souvarine, II).

What words would Lenin have had to discover to describe the following Stalinist lies?

"For the moment, universal, secret and direct suffrage is an unrealizable dream for most of the peoples of the world. The peoples of the Soviet Union possess that right" (*Nouvelles Soviétique*, October 20th, 1945).

Or the lie embodied in the question: "Where is there another country where people live so freely?"

"We have created colossal branches of industry on such a scale and in such dimensions that the scale and dimensions of European industry pale before them" (Stalin at the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934).

At the subsequent congress the same orator declared that they needed time, much time, in order to reach the scale of European industry which paled the congress before by comparison with Soviet industry. At the Eighth Soviet Congress Molotov extended the pallor of Europe to the agricultural sphere:

"We should like to see a bourgeois State giving its peasants 150,000,000 hectares of seignorial or other land without indemnity!" (*Les Conquêtes de la démocratie soviétique*, p. 53).

Such self-praise and such attacks are truly comic. For one thing, the volume of land ceded to the peasants must bear a relation to the total area of the country concerned. For another, the fact that Russia has experienced an agrarian revolution contrary to all the usages, the code and the desires of the bourgeoisie is one the latter has never dreamed of denying. And for a third, the 150 million hectares of land in Russia ceded to the peasants by Lenin have since been taken back by Stalin.

The lie is never more assured than when it turns the most obvious facts into their exact contrary; for instance:

"The right to work, the right to education and the right to rest! The overwhelming majority of the people who inhabit the earth pronounce these words to express a cherished dream at present unrealizable. But for the citizens of the Soviet Union they are natural rights quite beyond dispute" (*Pravda*, October 16th, 1936).

It is precisely where Soviet achievements are weakest that they are trumpeted out as most inspiring:

"The centre of science and world culture has now been transferred to us. The workers of the Soviet Union and their scientists are the bearers of all that is most advanced in the culture and science of the earth" (*Izvestia*, December 27th, 1936).

Certain particularly gross excesses seem to derive from impotent wish dreams. For instance, Alexis Tolstoy would be only too happy with his royalties in view if the following statement were something more than ridiculous hyperbole churned out to order:

"Soviet literature has become the literature of the whole world in the fullest sense. Our books are the centre of universal interest" (*Litt. Gazieta*, No. 29, Moscow, 1936).

Soviet excess in such matters is sometimes so infantile as to be almost disarming:

"In what other country and in what epoch have 170 writers received the highest distinctions of the State at the same time? Nowhere and never" (*V.O.K.S. Bulletin*, No. 3, Moscow, 1939, p. 61).

And here is a bit of music-hall burlesque:

"The President of the Central Council of Soviet Labour Unions has rebuked Tumarkine, the Chief Editor of *Trud*, for having published an article praising the performance of the men in charge of the Martin furnaces at the Hammer and Sickle Factory, seeing that such men and such furnaces do not exist" (*Za Industrializatsiu*, March 3rd, 1935).

"In the school books of Voskressensk there was a passage which read: 'In every house in this town there is a light and clean dining-room.' These words have provoked such indignation that the Town Soviet has ordered that the whole of the article in question should be blocked out.' One can see that lies are still being spread" (*Za Komunisticheskoi Obrazovanie*, August 14th, 1935).

And, finally, quite beyond the bounds of possibility, in the mysterious regions of fantasy, one comes across the Order of the Day issued by Marshal Stalin to the Red Army on the first anniversary of its "Victory over Japan":

"The Soviet people and its armed forces have victoriously brought the war against the Japanese imperialists to its conclusion" (*Izvestia*, September 4th, 1946).

Obviously the magnetism of exaggeration was at work here, for the achievements of the Red Army on the western front were

amply sufficient to swell its glory, whereas everyone knows (outside the Soviet Union) that in the Far East the Red Army did not intervene until the Americans and their atom bombs had finally settled the matter.

Before a discreet "Davolno" came from on high, together with a mild reproof, someone had to commit the following howler:

"To become a mother is a mark of honour for every Soviet woman. Was that possible formerly? Is it possible in any other country? In the capitalist countries the peasant women have their children in the fields" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, January 1st, 1937).

For those of our readers who may not know, *Pravda* means "Truth."

Human Sacrifices to Propaganda Fantasies

The Soviet Government does not hesitate to adopt the most inhuman measures to prolong the hallucinations which it creates in its own country concerning the outside world, and in the outside world concerning its own country.

From 1944 onwards men on leave from the Red Army and men invalidated out began to spread fascinating stories concerning the lives led by simple workers and peasants like themselves on the other side of the Soviet frontier, in Finland and in the Baltic countries in particular. We shall have occasion to discuss the matter again later and examine the counter-propaganda immediately launched by the Soviet Government to stem the peril which these revelations involved for the prestige of the dictatorship.

When peace was restored and the Red soldiers had to be brought home, the bearers of these dangerous "Western germs" naturally increased enormously in number and became a real menace. The Soviet Government then had to take ruthless measures, and it did. The process of demobilization was turned into a vast process of collective re intoxication. Soldiers due for demobilization were sent to an entirely different military district, where their re-education into faithful and docile subjects of the Soviet power lasted from three to nine months, according to the degree of their contamination. If after his term of re-education, the authorities felt convinced that the man either had no further opinions on the subject at all or believed that all those who had a bedroom to themselves and owned a bicycle were perfidious members of the upper 10,000, he was allowed to go back to his family. If no such conviction were felt, then the man was retained in the army of occupation or sent to a labour camp in Siberia.

The treatment meted out to those Red soldiers who became prisoners of war, and to those Russians who were forcibly recruited by the Germans in the occupied areas and sent to Germany to work, was very much worse. Unlike the Red soldiers who had

never been taken prisoner and had lived chiefly amongst themselves, always under the supervision of the Secret Police, these men had rubbed shoulders with the devil—in other words, they had lived in close contact with foreign conditions and for years they had not been under any Stalinist influence at all.

The *New Leader* of October, 1945, and the *Cahiers Libre* of February, 1946, published shocking details of the "Screening Commissions" set up by Stalin in place of the barbed wire of the Nazis. Every accused—for that was the position in which the "heroes" and "martyrs" of "The Great Patriotic War" now found themselves—had first of all to fill up a form containing dozens of questions covering the whole of his life in captivity down to the smallest details. After his statements had been verified, he was subjected to an interrogation which lasted several days, during the course of which he had to make detailed statements concerning everything he had seen, heard and thought whilst in captivity, and everything his fellow prisoners had said, done or attempted to do. After that one category was put up against the wall and shot; another was detailed for duty with the army of occupation in Germany or in Poland; and the third was sent back to the Soviet Union.

But these last were then immediately transported to Siberia, where work on a Polar railway would leave them very little hope of ever returning to their families. Officers and intellectuals were immediately isolated from the mass to receive a specially thorough screening proportionate to the increased danger represented by their higher education, for in the Soviet Union the fuller the human being the greater the suspicion.

Thanks to the widespread migration of peoples which took place at the end of the war, and despite the notorious Iron Curtain, many Soviet citizens succeeded in escaping through the meshes of the atrocious net in which their own country seeks to ensnare them all. They have demanded the right of asylum from the Western Powers, and they now represent a new wave of Russian emigration numbering tens of thousands of men and women, with their own organization and their own committees. Many of these men and women have demonstrated that they prefer death itself to a return to their "Socialist Fatherland," and according to an Associated Press message of February 8th, 1946, "ten irreproachable Soviet citizens hanged themselves in Dachau rather than return to their own country."

Although the available sources are not yet sufficient to permit us to measure their full extent, these convulsions suffered by a régime caught tight in its own lies, their very existence, which no one denies, is sufficient to suggest the gravest conclusions.

First of all they permit us to draw our own conclusions concerning

conditions in the Soviet Union. Whilst at such an exalted moment in the history of the sorely tried peoples of Europe the captives who had been held in unwilling exile rushed back to their hearths and their homes as soon as they were liberated, even the Germans and Austrians, although they well knew that nothing but ruin and destruction awaited them, these Soviet refugees preferred to stay in exile and never return. And whilst in all other countries committees of welcome were formed to give the returned wanderers a hearty reception, the Soviet authorities formed screening and purging committees in a general atmosphere of suspicion and coercion. Is that not irrefutable proof, provided by the Soviet authorities themselves, that their régime drives ordinary citizens to the most desperate lengths in order to escape it?

And there is another lesson for us here. Alas! it lies in the nature of despotism that those who resist it, those who give way but nevertheless whisper amongst themselves, and those who keep silent but think must die. The despotism of Hitler seemed to have reached the topmost pinnacle of infamy in imposing the penalty of death for the sole crime of "having been born," of having been born a member of the accursed race. But up to then the penalty of death "for having seen" was reserved to the cruel fantasy of fabulous tyrants known only in Asiatic legend. Their victims went to the headsman for having caught a glimpse of the unveiled features of a princess or stumbled upon a secret treasure hoard. To-day the fable has become harsh reality. In this day and age there are men who must die or lose their liberty indefinitely "for having seen," simply and solely for having seen the world around them—the non-Soviet world.

Soviet propaganda has not been able to rob its citizens of their sight, but it can, and does, rob them of their lives.

A crime every bit as great as "having seen" is that of "being seen." Listen to the poignant evidence of Kravchenko on this point:

"While in the Sovnarkom I heard a good deal about the special problems posed by the concentration camps and prisons in evacuating territory as the German gained ground. It was even more important to remove this slave population than the free citizens. . . . The apprehension that through the prisoners the outside world might learn some of the monstrous secrets of the extent and nature of the Soviet slave system. . . . Some of us in the Sovnarkom knew of episodes in which prisoners were killed on a mass scale when it became clear they could not be evacuated. This happened in Minsk, Smolensk, Kiev, Kharkov, Dniepropetrovsk and Zaparozhie. One such episode has remained with me in detail. In the tiny Kabardino-Balkar Soviet autonomous republic in the Caucasus, near the city of Nalchik, there was a molybdenum *combinat* of the

N.K.V.D. operated with convict labour. When the Red Army retreated from this area, several hundred prisoners, for technical transport reasons, could not be evacuated in time. The Director of the *combinat*, by order of the Commissar of the Kabardino-Balkar N.K.V.D., Comrade Anokhov, machine-gunned the unfortunates to the last man and woman" (Kravchenko, p. 405).

In many respects Stalinism and Nazism are models of that new social régime, freak product of the reign of "public opinion," in which power is held by those who control the masses and based on the psychological fixations of the mob. An extreme outcome of this system, which sheds a sinister illumination on the deference all modern dictatorships owe to the principle of government by popular consent they trample underfoot, is the political excess which sacrifices men to safeguard the fictions invented to befool them. Let those who live die in order that the lie may live on.

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To the farthest corners of the Soviet power the lie reigns supreme. The observer of the Russian scene is soon aghast and, like Lenin, feels an inclination to vomit.

On the ashes of a crumbled ideal and amidst a harried and betrayed people a swirl of impenetrable lies blankets all access to reality. Figures, communiqués, admissions, proclamations, indignation, praise, victories, sabotage, constitutions, deaths, births—everything is a travesty, a counterfeit, a parody, an invention; everything is changed, adulterated, puffed up, spoiled and destroyed. And truth itself, met with by chance through the network of an intrigue, appears somnabulistic, like a thing in a dream, amidst a succession of shams and distortions.

One sixth of the globe and a quarter of a century are barricaded behind the lie.

THE BUREAUCRACY

"The great ones of the earth do well enough when they do nothing harmful." Beaumarchais.

Preliminary Bearings

THE WORD "BUREAUCRACY," like most words of the same suffix, indicates a political régime. In this case a government of officials. But usage has given it a second sense: the totality of people who work in government offices, irrespective of whether they share in governmental power or not.

We propose to use the word in its accepted sense, but with the qualification that it shall apply only to persons invested with a certain authority. The cleaners, the messengers, the office-boys, the caretakers, the shorthand typists, the cashiers, the doorkeepers, etc.—in short those who are really only workers in offices—we class with the proletariat. The bureaucracy, as we propose to use the word, embraces only those in a position of responsibility in governmental, political and economic organizations: the ministers themselves, their under-secretaries, members of parliament, high permanent officials, secretaries of local executive committees and of various public organizations, technical managers, etc., in industry, finance or commerce, leaders of the Communist Party, the Communist Youth, labour unions and co-operatives, presidents and vice-presidents of *kolkhozes*, tractor stations and so on, responsible military and police chiefs and officials, responsible judges and officials of the judiciary, journalists, doctors, well-known professors, artists and authors. We shall often employ the word "cadres" as a synonym for "bureaucrats."

Within the bureaucracy itself there is a very great degree of differentiation. The powers wielded by the cadres vary very considerably as the powers of a general vary from those of a second lieutenant, though both are essentially connected with the highly-privileged officers corps. The hierarchy of material privilege is also very considerable. The income of some of those at the base of the bureaucratic hierarchy can quite well be less than that of certain particularly favoured groups of workers. After all, in capitalist countries there are employers of labour on a small scale who are, in fact, materially worse off than highly-skilled and highly-paid workers. However, that has not prevented the Marxists, basing their arguments on the average of large numbers, from

dividing capitalist society into a ruling and possessing class, known as the bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and a subordinate and impoverished class, known as the proletariat, on the other, and, between them, forming a sort of bridge merging insensibly into both classes at either end, a so-called middle class.

Similarly as against the workers and peasants in the Soviet Union, who are deprived of all rights and reduced to a really miserable standard of living, the bureaucracy constitutes a privileged class, and its internal differentiation does not affect this primary social fact. It is true that none of the members of this ruling class in the Soviet Union possess capital individually, but collectively they control the means of production and exchange just as they control the levers of political life. It is this bourgeoisie which directs Soviet economy, and it does so without sharing control in the least with the industrial and agricultural proletariat. It develops this branch of production and retards that; it fixes prices; it controls distribution; and it decides the rate of accumulation—all without any interference from below. And, finally, and above all, it appropriates the "surplus value" to create its own privileges and it distributes the benefits amongst its members *pro rata* according to their "functions," just as a limited liability company distributes its profits amongst its directors and shareholders in proportion to their competence and the capital they have invested.

The Soviet Union also possesses the equivalent of a middle class; its members are the multitude of subordinate technicians, little men in the liberal professions, brigade leaders in the *kolkhozes*, Oudarniks and Stakhanovites, permanent or ordinary members of the organizational bureaux (secretaries of such bureaux are part of the bureaucracy itself on account of the power they wield). This stratum of "non-commissioned officers" plays the traditional role of cement, so necessary to the continued existence of any class society. At its lower and broader end this stratum incorporates the most active elements in the proletariat and those most desirous of improving their class position. At its higher and narrower end it represents a source of recruitment for the bureaucracy, and at the same time a channel of contact with the people far below. The middle class is the ambition of the little men and the instrument of the big men, a door to domination and a school of servility. The differentiation of wages and salaries in the Soviet Union stretches from one basic unit for the manual labourer to ten for the Stakhanovite and 100 for the highly-placed bureaucrat.

Once we have made the general acquaintance of the Soviet régime, we will deal with certain psychological and social problems which must already be troubling the minds of our readers. For instance, why does the bureaucracy accept a discipline which often extends as far as the physical extermination of some, even

many, of its members? Why does it delegate the exercise of power to its "political" and non-technical fraction? How does a régime which proclaims itself "classless" govern hierarchically? What are its future prospects? How stable is it? But for the moment let us confine ourselves to a justification of our provisional definition of Soviet bureaucracy as a privileged class by providing a few descriptive proofs:

Bureaucratic Profusion

The bureaucrats in the political administration are appointed by the Ministers. The bureaucrats in the public organizations are chosen in gerrymandered elections, though often they are merely "co-opted." No candidature for any of the nominally elective posts is valid, let us recall, unless it has previously been approved by the "Direction of Cadres" attached to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, whilst the right to remove officials after election, which the Bolshevik Revolution claimed to have placed in the hands of the people as a whole, it is in fact the exclusive privilege of the central organisms.

Basily estimates that the total number of bureaucrats in the Soviet Union in 1939 was 8,000,000 (N. de Basily, *La Russie sous les Soviets*, Plon, Paris, p. 217). Yourievski, in a very thorough study of the problem, gives the following structure of the population in the Soviet Union: workers, 16,800,000, or about 21·2 per cent.; peasants and artisans, 53,000,000, or about 67·5 per cent.; and employees, 9,000,000, or about 11·3 per cent. (*Posledni Novosti*, Paris, June 18th, 1939). Yourievski does not include the leading personnel of the *kolkhozes* amongst the "employees," and Soviet statistics lump them in with the peasants. Taking that correction into account, the *Bulletin Quotidien* of May 2nd, 1939, arrives at a total figure of 11,500,000 "employees."

On the other hand, this figure includes minor employees in government offices, etc., whom we have decided to include either in the proletariat or the middle class. If, by analogy with the proportions in a ministry and its department in France, we estimate the proportion of these subordinate employees at 60 per cent. of the whole, we arrive at a figure of approximately 5,000,000 real bureaucrats in our sense, which, incidentally, is the figure given by Trotsky in his book, *The Revolution Betrayed*. However, this writing-off of 60 per cent. seems a little too sweeping for the Soviet Union, because the lowest strata of the bureaucracy already figure in the category of "workers and peasants" in Soviet statistics. All things considered, an approximation somewhere between 7 and 9 millions for 1940 seems more likely. If this is correct, then the bureaucracy—that is to say, the privileged class in the Soviet Union—represents about 11 per cent. of the population. Basing

his calculation on the years 1940-5, Dallin arrives at a figure of 13 per cent. of the total population (Dallin, *The Real Soviet Russia*, Yale University Press, 1946), but he is dealing with the war years, and that explains the considerable increase, for war is a great begetter of bureaucrats.

For the purposes of comparison with France, we have sought to estimate the total figures of the same "bureaucracy" there. The *Statistique générale de la France* divides the active population into *Chefs d'Etablissement*, *Employés* and *Ouvriers*. The first category also includes very small-scale employers running shops or workshops employing one, two or perhaps three workmen, and these we have deducted from the bureaucracy and counted them amongst the middle class. As against this we have added to the bureaucracy such employees of the second category as take a responsible part in its direction. The *Statistique générale* does not indicate what percentage this represents. However, it is possible to find certain indications in the budgets of the big corporations and public undertakings, and in the balance sheets of certain industrial organizations, which make a calculation possible. To these figures we add the liberal professions, high officials, etc. As a result of our calculations, we have arrived at the conclusion that the French "bureaucracy," in the sense of the word we have adopted for the Soviet Union, comprises about 1,200,000 persons, or roughly 5.5 per cent. of the active population. This permits us to conclude that the Soviet régime, which has twice as many "cadres," is roughly speaking twice as bureaucratic as the French régime, which, incidentally, has the reputation of being excessively bureaucratic. This swollen and costly Soviet élite could not, on an average, make its economy produce more than half what was produced *per capita* in the same period in France. Thus one might say that the burden of bureaucracy on society is four times heavier in the Soviet Union than in France. It is therefore not surprising that the margin left over for mass consumption after the demands of the bureaucracy have been satisfied does not permit a standard of life above the vital minimum—and an Asiatic minimum at that.

The Soviet labour unions provide a striking example of the great profusion of bureaucrats and administrative employees in the Soviet Union. In his book, *I search for Truth in Soviet Russia*, Sir Walter Citrine reports that at the boot and shoe works Skorokhod in Leningrad the contributions of 14,000 workers pay the salaries of forty permanent trade-union officials. And the *Correspondance Internationale*, published by the French Communist Party, reveals that in 1935 20 million organized workers groaned under the weight of two million "trade-union cadres," 580,267 being members of factory councils, and another 1,133,000 being members of Section Committees, group organizers, treasurers, insurance representatives,

controllers, and so on. But even this shocking figure published in a French Communist magazine is outdone by a Soviet publication (*Strano Sotsializma*, Moscow, 1936, p. 97), which estimates the number of such "cadres" at 3 millions. Certainly we must not forget that the Soviet trade unions are fused with the personnel of the Ministry of Labour and the social insurance scheme, but even so the total seems excessive to say the least of it. In 1936 the upkeep of this gigantic apparatus absorbed 415 million roubles out of total contributions amounting to 489 million roubles (*Trud*, January 15th, 1937, and *Izvestia*, April 24th, 1937). The other sources of revenue enjoyed by the unions include collections, entrance fees for meetings, etc., the sale of newspapers, magazines and pamphlets, and the trade-union tax paid by industrial undertakings.

The same thing applies to the rural areas. From a decree issued by Stalin in September, 1946, we learn officially that "the *kolkhozes* are overburdened by a maximum of administrative personnel" to the point of creating labour shortage in the fields. "These administrative employees do nothing but draw higher salaries than the peasants" (*Pravda*, September 19th, 1946).

The situation in the apparatus of the Communist Party is no different. They draft minutes, reports, orders and counter-orders endlessly. During a purge, Kaganovitch addressed his subordinates and indulged in a little appropriate "self-criticism."

"Take, for example, the agricultural machinery works in Rostov. . . . The party organization there has an enormous apparatus. The party committee has five sections. Twenty militants, relieved of all work in the factory, are on the factory committee. . . . Or take the Petrovski factory at Dniepropetrovsk. Seventy-five militants work in the party committee and in the factory cells. . . . Here are the eleven sections which exist in the party factory committee and in each workshop cell: (1) culture and propaganda; (2) mass agitation; (3) cadres section; (4) control section; (5) section for work amongst the non-party workers; (6) section for work amongst the party candidates; (7) section for the control of the role of the Communist advance guard in production (*Laughter*); (8) section for work amongst the Communist Youth; (9) section for work amongst the women; (10) Co-operative section; and (11) section for the distribution of tasks in the party (Kaganovitch, pp. 87-9).

In the same factory the hygienic organization, the co-operative, the club and the general technical and economic administration were all encumbered with the same rank growth of bureaucracy.

From time to time the profusion of bureaucrats becomes so stifling that the Government is compelled to take action, but then it is the little people in the offices who suffer rather than the cadres which form the bureaucracy properly so-called.

Serge Karsky reports that in a single year (1946) and in the 166

economic administration alone, 20 per cent. of the total official personnel were obliged to leave the service and take up "productive work." The "anti-bureaucratic" campaign was naturally turned into a propaganda epic. One fine day the citizens of the Soviet Union were informed that a heroine named Galina Sergienko, up to then bookkeeper in a factory, had spontaneously left her factory to throw herself enthusiastically into productive work. Her example was immediately followed by tens of thousands of other officials and office employees. (Alas! said evil tongues, not those of the Kremlin.) But what, one wonders, happened to the famous plan in this tempestuous general post? Surely Comrade Galina Sergienko and all those tens of thousands who followed her inspiring example had been given their previous jobs according to the usual scientific prescience which controls all appointments in the Soviet Union? And the positions they now chose to occupy, had they not been reserved in the same way for specialists?

Privileges in Cash

The Soviet Government publishes no figures concerning the extent and the income of its ruling class, and modestly includes them in the statistics under the general heading of "Salaries." The "National Average" is the only official figure which emerges from this statutory uniformity. To reveal the inequalities which this general heading conceals is possible only by studying documents relating to less general matters which are revealed in the publicity statistics.

In *Posledni Novosti* of June 18th, 1939, Yourievski calculates an average wage of 240 roubles a month for workers (which includes the privileged group of Stakhanovites) and an average salary of 550 roubles a month for technicians (which includes groups which would not be considered as technicians in any country, but one with such low cultural and technical standards as the Soviet Union) from the National Economic Plan for the Heavy Industries. A more detailed analysis of the 590,000 "technicians" engaged in the heavy industries shows 55 per cent. with an average of 350 roubles a month; 17 per cent. with 500 roubles a month, 11 per cent. with 900 roubles a month, and 13 per cent. with more than 1,000 roubles a month. It is the three last mentioned categories which we regard as specifically bureaucratic.

If we deduct the wages of Stakhanovites and Oudarniks from the general fund of working-class wages, then the average working-class wage falls to about 150 roubles a month for the same year (1939). In this way we obtain a relation of approximately 5 : 1 between an income properly called bureaucratic and a wage properly called proletarian. The difference is much greater than it was in the same period in the industry centred on Paris, for

example, where the average salary of a responsible technician was approximately 6,000 francs a month, whilst the average wage of the worker in the same industries was around 1,500 francs. Of course, both in the Soviet Union and in France the "peak salaries" increase towards the top. In a book written after his return from an official mission to the Soviet Union, Bettelheim mentions some salaries which reach 3,000 roubles a month, or twenty times the average wage of a worker (Bettelheim, p. 62). Two non-Soviet engineers to whom we have spoken report that whilst in the Soviet Union they earned between 6,000 and 8,000 roubles in a month, and that some of their Soviet colleagues had also done so. *La Industrializatsiia* of December 14th, 1935, mentions some factory directors who earned 10,000 roubles monthly, or the wages of about 100 manual workers.

The Red Army no more practises equalitarianism in this respect than any other institution in the Soviet Union. Voroshilov himself informs us that in 1939 a Soviet lieutenant received 625 roubles monthly, whilst a Soviet colonel's pay was 2,000 roubles. In France in the same period the corresponding rates of pay were 2,000 francs and 5,000 francs. Contrary to the most elementary democratic principles, pay increases are much greater for higher officers than for lower, and much greater for lower officers than for workers. Between 1934 and 1939 the respective pay increases were 305 per cent., 240 per cent. and 120 per cent.

The old Bolshevik programme prided itself on following the example set by the Paris Commune, and the *Pravda* of May 20th, 1917, wrote: "The pay of the highest officials should not be more than the average wage of a good worker." But by January 17th, 1938, when the average wage of a good worker was about 250 roubles a month, the Soviet Government thought it fit and proper that Soviet Deputies should receive 1,000 roubles a month plus 150 roubles for every day spent in session; that the presidents of the eleven federated republics should receive 12,500 roubles a month, and that presidents and vice-presidents of the Union should receive salaries rising to 25,000 roubles a month.

The highest paid social stratum in the Soviet Union is that of artists and writers in fashion for the time being, the high priests of the new religion. In this respect, all authors, residents or tourists, friends and enemies of the Soviet Union are in agreement:

"It is amongst the high officials and the intellectuals, film men, theatre men, etc., that we find the members of the Soviet *mondaine* world who go to the strands and beaches of the Black Sea and to certain restaurants in the big towns, creating an impression more bourgeois than Communist" (Friedmann, *De la Sainte Russie à l'U.R.S.S.*, Gallimard, Paris, 1938, p. 120).

Friedmann records that these authors, film producers and so on,

can easily earn 7,000, 10,000 and 17,000 roubles a month. By a decree of March 4th, 1936, published in the *Izvestia* of March 5th and the *Pravda* of March 14th, the Soviet Government offered prizes of 100,000, 75,000, 50,000 and 25,000 roubles for a textbook of Soviet history. At that period 100,000 roubles represented thirty-eight years' wages for an ordinary worker. Maxim Gorki, because he became outwardly reconciled with the Soviet régime towards the sad end of his noble life, received royalties amounting to 100,000 roubles a month. That represents the highest "salary" known as yet in the Soviet Union.

The privileged situation of the new dominant class in the Soviet Union is often publicly flaunted with a cynicism which no bourgeoisie anywhere in the world would dare to display. For instance, the deflationary monetary decree of December 13th, 1947, deprived the holders of Government issues—that is to say, the little men—of nine-tenths of their possessions, whereas bank balances were exchanged against the new roubles at par up to 3,000 roubles, at a ratio of 3 : 2 up to 5,000 roubles; and at 3 : 1 for accounts above 10,000 roubles. Thus the bureaucrats, who are the principal possessors of banking accounts in the Soviet Union, did not lose on an average more than half of their money.

Privileges in Kind

In 1939—we choose this year because the figures available had not at that time been affected by the economic upsets made inevitable by the war—the value of the rouble was approximately 1½d. This meant that the monthly pay of a colonel in the Red Army or of a factory director was about £12 10s. This might suggest that neither of these gentlemen had very much material cause to deify their great patron Stalin, but to draw such a conclusion would be erroneous; there are other considerations which must be taken into consideration.

The official net total of a salary is by no means its gross total. The Five-Year Plan contains as many discreet corners, even caverns, where hidden resources are available, as any bourgeois society. There are funds for rewarding special efforts to secure increases in production, for providing bonuses for exceeding the set target, for paying travelling expenses, etc. And in addition there are black markets which operate in the ante-chambers of the trusts and the ministries, speculations more or less fraudulent, and so on. A study of Soviet customs will provide us with ample proofs of this. And a more legitimate source provides the privileged elements with a very respectable addition to their salaries; this comprises the privileges in kind which go with high office.

"A factory employing perhaps 10,000 workers receives scores of theatre tickets. . . . They are handed first of all to the directors,

managers, etc., and nothing remains for the workers. . . . Amongst us there are judges, factory directors and officials who spend time in our sanatoria armed with special authorizations which should by right be granted only to workers" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, No. 93, 1937).

An important declaration made by Shvernik at the Eighteenth Party Congress in March, 1939, confirms this accusation and even generalizes it:

"Every year our sanatoria and rest homes are used by approximately 2,000,000 people (compared with 27,000,000 urban wage and salary earners). Above all, it is considerations of social status which decide who shall enjoy these privileges."

And Kravchenko in his book reveals that as a higher official he possessed "... a little red book which gave me the right to use the hospital of the Kremlin, and to purchase medicaments at a time when they were not available to the general public."

The bureaucracy is not content with taking the places properly reserved for workers in the sanatoria, etc., but at the expense of the State Budget they maintain a network of rest centres officially reserved to their own exclusive use. The American journalist, Louis Fischer, at one time a warm Soviet sympathizer, writes:

"The best sanatorium in Kislovodsk belongs to the G.P.U. The G.P.U. is also the owner of the best office buildings in Moscow, Leningrad, Karkhov and many other towns. Its employees supply their needs from the best co-operatives" (Fischer, p. 198).

At the time of his visit to the Soviet Union in 1944, when he was attached to the Johnson U.S. Government commercial mission, an American journalist named White, who up to that time had been favourably disposed towards the Soviet régime, suffered some surprise and a deal of indignation when he discovered that food rations were larger in the upper reaches of the Soviet hierarchy:

"A glance into the restaurant of the workers shows us that their food consists primarily of buckwheat porridge, black bread—a nourishing food—and cabbage soup. It looks quite good. Behind in another room is the restaurant of the foremen. The food there is the same, with the addition of black pressed caviare. A little farther is the restaurant of the engineers. Their food is the same, except that instead of black pressed caviare they receive the more expensive variety, not pressed and not salted, and in addition they have white bread and a generous supply of butter. The table of the Director is infinitely superior to the private table of no matter what corporation or company director in the United States."

The high dignitaries of the Soviet Union have private villas at their disposal rent free—villas which have been described as princely by the diplomats, journalists and favoured pilgrims who have been able to see them. In addition, they have motor cars,

secretaries and servants at their disposal, enjoy private theatrical and cinema performances, have the services of medical specialists, open accounts at the big stores, receive private information concerning the arrival of scarce goods, have special schools for their children, and so on. All this adds up to a standard of life for the bureaucracy very considerably higher than that indicated purely on the basis of their net salaries in cash.

The Life Beautiful—and Happy

By his astounding invention of "Socialism in one country alone" in 1925, Stalin clearly expressed the desire of the Bolshevik cadres to enjoy their power in peace. Three years later, thanks to the administrative success of the Five Year Plan, he was able to enrich the breviary of the new ruling class with the gratifying slogan: "Life has become beautiful and happy in our country." In two speeches delivered on November 17th and December 1st, 1935, respectively, the Great Master authorized the lesser lights to enjoy their privileges publicly—privileges which up to then they had enjoyed with a certain restraint and reserve. Immediately the material pleasures of the new Soviet *mondaine* world came to the fore in a wave, and rising like a vapour from it came a new chorus of adulation for the despotic dispenser of so many new and gratifying reasons to live. The new *Incroyables* with their caviare were delighted with the new Barras with his knout.

The luxury industries, or, rather, the industries producing what are considered luxuries in a poor country like Soviet Russia, increased their production by leaps and bounds. The *Pravda* of February 26th, 1938, announced that by comparison with 1932 the financial year 1936 had seen sensational increases in the production of silk (250 per cent.), cameras (600 per cent.), watches (860 per cent.), and gramophones (1,860 per cent.). In the same period the production of cotton and linen, already more than deficient, increased by only 10 per cent. and 15 per cent. In the *Izvestia* the Chief of Construction Works in Moscow, Dieliukine, announced to workers having no more than four or five square yards of living space that in 1937 the town would build 400 blocks of flats with two to five rooms and all modern comforts, including servants' quarters, such rooms to be of about seven square yards, whilst the rooms of the occupiers of the flats would be between fourteen and twenty yards square.

In 1935 official statistics recorded the existence of 258,000 domestic servants. *Trud* No. 127 of 1936 admitted that "the enormous increase in registration fees will make divorce a luxury available only to higher categories and well-paid workers."

In the same speech the People's Commissar for Commerce, Mikoyan, admitted on the one hand that the co-operatives were

short of the simplest sweets, and announced on the other that the production of superfine sweetmeats was about to begin, and he also declared that "our women require the best perfumes." The *Pravda* of February 6th, 1938, declared that the manufacture of tobacco was behind its target to the extent of some 13 milliard cigarettes, but that this did not appear in the rouble value of production, owing to the manufacture of luxury cigarettes at a very high price (Basily, p. 473). When the Soviet Government does turn its attention for a moment away from the giants of heavy industry, then it is primarily to those branches of the light industries which satisfy the demands of the privileged groups at the expense of those which could raise the consumption of the masses above the poverty line.

Advertisements appear in the Soviet newspapers which can hardly be for the benefit of workers earning about 200 roubles a month: perfumes at 200 roubles a small bottle, and dolls at 95 roubles each (*Izvestia*, February 4th and 6th, 1936), champagne from Abraou-Durso at 35 roubles a bottle, the addresses and telephone numbers of florists and modern hairdressers, of restaurants which charge between 50 and 100 roubles a meal, of night clubs, of jazz cafés, of caterers providing private banquets complete with expert service, and so on. The Soviet railways, whose wagons were once divided into two classes, "soft" and "hard," as all readers of Soviet travel stories know, have now two other categories, "international" and "*wagons-lit*." In July, 1935, the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* criticized "the habit of high officials to entrust the education of their children to foreign governesses, and to employ nursemaids." Do such admissions go too far? Indeed they do. Listen to the indignation of the *Izvestia* of March 29th, 1938, which complains that:

"Enemies of the people have perverted the census of the population by mentioning such occupations as vagabonds, prostitutes, lackeys and governesses."

Perhaps it would have been more Marxist if the unfortunate compilers of the census had referred to explorers of the Soviet roads, consolers of tired Soviet business men, decorators of floors, and controllers on the suckling front, but even if they had, the true nature of the Soviet régime would hardly have been changed. In March, 1939, Kalinin, who was then Soviet President, thought it necessary to address the following exhortation to members of the party employed at the Commissariat of Agriculture:

"Abandon the habits and the inveterate psychology of a privileged caste. . . . It is a real misfortune that the future is closed to about 80 per cent. of all honest Soviet workers" (as reported in the *Bulletin Quotidien* on October 20th, 1939).

It is useless for Kalinin to be shocked at the avidity with which

the new masters pursue their personal interests, for a rising class is like an adolescent in the full period of growth: its appetite is insolent and insatiable.

On October 20th, 1940, a decree of the Council of People's Commissars (*Digest of Soviet Laws*, published in Moscow and in part in other countries, No. 27, October 26th, 1940, p. 637) abolished free tuition at higher educational establishments and introduced fees at Soviet universities rising to 1,200 roubles annually, an absolutely prohibitive sum for proletarians and even for members of the middle class. Incidentally, let us note that this decree openly violates Article 121 of the Constitution, which includes free higher education amongst the inalienable rights of the Soviet citizen—that is to say, amongst those rights which no governmental *ukase* may abolish. Thus Soviet universities have now become officially what they already were in practice: the jealously guarded hunting ground of the Soviet bureaucracy and its protégés.

Let us conclude by recording two developments which show particularly blatantly the class spirit of the new privileged groups in the Soviet Union. Firstly, "Eton Colleges" are now being opened in parks in the neighbourhood of big towns for the education of the sons of men who are the masters of millions of their fellow men; and, secondly, compared with rest homes for workers—where they still exist in the Soviet Union—those for the bureaucrats reveal an even greater class difference than in wages and salaries. Increasing shamelessly at the most critical ages, cynically reserving the hope which conditions life and the serenity which mitigates death to those of its choice, privilege demonstrates once again in the Soviet Union that its aim is to comfort and pamper and not to make great.

Riches have no sense except in relation to poverty, and the very word "privilege" suggests something relative. If the 2,000 roubles a month of the Soviet colonel in 1939 was worth no more than £12 10s., then the 200 roubles a month of the Soviet worker was worth no more than 25s. It is in this second figure that the essential Russian problem reposes. To sleep huddled up with many others, to awake in the same filth in which he went to sleep, to wait in a line for his turn at a trickle of icy cold water from a tap, to put on his rags again, to breathe the asphyxiating atmosphere of a tram packed to suffocation point, to slave at his machine to the Stakhanovite rhythm under the ever-watchful eye of the Secret Police, to eat buckwheat porridge and cabbage soup, to live in constant fear of being sent off 3,000 miles away on forced labour, to hear nothing but the insolent howl of lying propaganda on all sides—thus the everyday horizon of Ivan Ivanovitch, the eternal *mujik* in the land of *mujiks*.

To understand the Soviet Union, one must never lose sight of

this unchanging background. It is against its desolation alone that one can measure the value of a room of one's own, a juicy beef-steak, a warm piece of material, a summer-house with its arbour. All these things are common enough in the capitalist countries of Western Europe and they are enjoyed by all, but in the Soviet Union they are privileges of the gods. To have access to such simple things and simple pleasures is to pass from the age of the mud hut to the contemporary age, to pass from a panting for breath to a deep, satisfied respiration, to pass from brutish existence to life. We can say without exaggeration that the attraction of privilege is more tyrannical in poverty-stricken societies than it is in rich societies, because in the latter the conditions of the poorer sections of the population is still tolerable, whilst some cultural and moral satisfactions, including the pride of independence, are accessible to even the most modest, and respected by even the most powerful. In countries of misery, such as the Soviet Union, the individual can emerge from the morass only if he can secure a pole of material privilege to assist him, no matter how short it may be. And if he is offered this pole by the powers that be he will retain a fanatical gratitude to them for lifting him out of the rut.

The political net to catch men's souls has much closer and finer meshes than the economic net to catch men's bodies. In an uncultured country groaning under a dictatorship a share in the power, no matter how small, is the only means of securing some degree of relief; even when the apparatus is as severely hierarchical as it is in the Soviet Union, and even if the lower bureaucrat is kept in a constant state of anxious servility, he still feels he has become an individual. He is sometimes consulted; one of his minor ideas may one day be realized; he is after all rubbing elbows with a superior life; and, finally, and above all, he can in his turn command and watch men obey, if not his ideas, at least his will. One of the pleasures of the petty tyrant? Perhaps. But it is a deliberate activity more human than the harassed rush to execute orders which is the lot of the tyrannized.

It is natural that a class *defined by its function* should be proud. Incompetence in the performance of its function transforms pride into arrogance, but that only reinforces the tender sentiment of the bureaucrat for his headed note-paper. The *esprit de corps* of the Soviet bureaucracy has found a marvellous cloak in the traditional admiration of labour encouraged in the Socialist movement side by side with a contempt for money. The main reproach many workers make to the bourgeoisie is that they serve no useful purpose in the process of production, and that they justify their position only by the unearned privilege of inheritance. Rightly or wrongly, material advantage—even very considerable material advantage—is easily admitted provided it is attached to a directorial function

recognized as indispensable and held by merit. It is not difficult to see that this state of mind amongst the masses represents a perfect foil for the bureaucrats.

The Neo-intelligentsia

In the bitter violence of the civil war the Bolshevik Government practically wiped out the old Russian intelligentsia. Without joining the counter-revolution, the majority of the intellectuals of the old régime condemned the innovations of Lenin. Lenin and his followers were thus compelled to make a virtue of necessity, and so they plunged into a proletarianism which soon caused the masses to develop a systematic contempt for intelligence as such. These excesses cost Russia dear. The last years of Lenin's life were filled almost entirely by a desperate struggle for the culture he had done so much to destroy. His anguished warnings died with him. It took Stalin eleven years to give way to the evidence. On May 4th, 1935, speaking to the graduates of five military and technical military academies, he announced a new policy:

"Formerly we said that technique decided everything, but that is not enough. To put technique into operation, to utilize it thoroughly, it is necessary to have men who possess this technique. We require cadres capable of assimilating this technique. . . . That is why our old slogan, 'Technique decides everything,' must be replaced by a new slogan: 'The cadres decide everything.' This is the essential thing" (Stalin, III, and reported in the *Pravda*, May 5th, 1935).

This morsel is authentically Stalin in style, but his satellites, well versed in the jargon of the Master, realized at once what he meant: from now on they were to make eyes at the intelligentsia, whose services had been found necessary.

In 1936 a decree was issued amalgamating the Communist Academy with the Academy of Sciences (*Pravda*, February 8th, 1936), and the intelligentsia was promoted to the dignity of "a leading cultural force, closely united with the people and, in the mass, ready to serve the people faithfully and honestly" (Stalin, *dixit*). An order issued by the Central Council of Soviet Labour Unions (*Trud*, June 6th, 1939) underlined the importance of the engineers, and assured them leading and directorial posts in industry.

On May 1st, 1939, the traditional inscription, "Long live the union of workers and peasants," was replaced by a new inscription, "Long live the united front of the workers, peasants and intellectuals," and sometimes even "Long live our Socialist Intelligentsia."

Speaking at the Eighteenth Party Congress, Molotov insisted:

"All cultured men, all technicians and all men of science, the old and the new intelligentsia, are necessary for the Soviet people

if we are to achieve the great tasks which have been imposed upon us."

As a lot of time had to be made up and a lot of lost men recovered, Stalin turned again to the old intelligentsia, what there was left of it, in the hope of drawing its members into the service of the Government. He charged the *Pravda* of April 12th, 1939, to prove by St. Marx and all his apostles that it was—

"... erroneous and deleterious systematically to prefer the new cultured class issued from the ranks of the workers and peasants to that of the intellectuals *of noble or bourgeois origin* who had finished their studies before the Revolution" (underlined in the original text).

April, 1939, saw the intellectuals present at both private and public meetings. Writers, artists, engineers, economists and historians, all carefully strapped into the corset of Stalin's ideas, began to discourse in carefully chosen language concerning the latest problems set by "our great and well-beloved Leader."

The facts contained in this book prove abundantly that Stalin had not the slightest intention of permitting the development of clubs of the new intelligentsia, which might well become hotbeds of a new democratic resurrection and lead to a restoration of spiritual health in the Soviet Union. The new attitude of Stalin was essentially nothing but an attempt to extricate Soviet economy from the difficulties into which the smug ignorance of tyrannous Communism has led it.

The New Intellectual Policy strongly resembles the New Economic Policy introduced by Lenin in 1922. The analogy is close enough to justify the use of the neologism N.I.P. to describe it. It is characteristic of Stalin's methods that before introducing this N.I.P. he took good care to massacre all those who might have turned it into a basis for independent growth. The purges of the years 1936 to 1938, which were carried out with particular savagery against the most eminent representatives of Soviet culture, were there in the background as a guide to the new privileged, and a warning of what it would cost them to trespass beyond the limits within which the Master was prepared to let them be intelligent. Stalin could now open one or two taps of oxygen without risk. The respiration of the new spirit would wisely follow the rhythm of his slogans. First the knout and then the carrot.

The totalitarian structure of Soviet bureaucracy does not preserve it from those internal dissensions which are customary within the bosom of ruling classes. For some time now careful observers have noted a certain amount of skirmishing between the "technicians" and the "politicians," the former reproaching the latter with hampering their work by exigencies both unjust and menacing, and, above all, with taking a far greater share of the privileges than

they are entitled to. There is also a division amongst the "technicians" themselves, the "industrials" tend to come together in one group and the "thinkers" in the other, the latter claiming to be alone capable of giving the régime a little cultural prestige. The "technocracy" is jealous of the "ideocracy," and both are contemptuous of the "partocracy," which, for the moment, dominates the bureaucracy common to them all. Stalin is not in the least disturbed at the existence of these rivalries; on the contrary, he regards them as an opportunity of putting the old adage into operation: divide and rule. He distributes his servants over the country in parallel groups, all of which must look to the Kremlin for the bonds to draw them all together in one united whole in defence of their common interests.

The Political Pre-eminence of the Bureaucracy

The solemn assemblies which, according to Soviet propaganda, represent the heart of the new proletarian democracy, are essentially composed of bureaucrats. The Mandate Commission of the last All-Union Congress of Soviets published the occupation of 2,016 delegates (speech of Yakovlev, in *Conquêtes de la démocratie soviétique*, p. 209) as follows:

	<i>Per cent.</i>
Engineers, agronomists, scientific workers and artists	5
Directors of undertakings	5
Officials of the labour unions and the party	16
Members of the central committees of territorial, regional and republican soviets	18
Presidents of district and village soviets	16
Delegates of the Red Army	7
	<hr/>
Total of avowed bureaucrats	67
	<hr/>

According to the Mandate Commission, the remaining 33 per cent. was composed of "workers," 19 per cent., and "peasants," 14 per cent. However, the detailed figures indicate that 63 per cent. of the "peasants" were secretaries of executive committees of rural soviets. This raises the percentage of bureaucrats to 76 per cent. Amongst the workers and peasants, 97 per cent. were Stakhanovites, Oudarniks, brigade leaders and so on. The end results are: 76 per cent. bureaucrats, 22 per cent. middle class, and 2 per cent. proletarian.

The promulgation of "the most democratic constitution in the world" has done nothing to change this delegate composition of important conferences, etc. Official statistics inform the world that

a colossal percentage of the members of the All-Union Council are "of working class and peasant origin," but Yugov (*D.O.S.S.E.*, 1938) has gone into the matter, not according to social origin but according to the actual present occupations of the delegates as revealed in their own statements in the *Pravda* in its numbers from December 11th-30th, 1937, and the picture he paints is a very different one. With the exception of twenty-seven miscellaneous or unknown, the list reads as follows:

Commissariat of the Interior and G.P.U.	42
Army	64
Party officials	107
Government officials	122
Trade union officials	12
Higher personnel in industry	46
Presidents of <i>kolkhozes</i>	30
Liberal professions	39
	—
Total	462
	—

This makes a total of 83 per cent. bureaucrats.

Workers and Stakhanovites	41
Tractor drivers	26
<i>Kolkhoze</i> members	23
	—
Total	90
	—

This makes a total of 17 per cent. for the middle class and the proletariat of the fields and the factories.

More or less the same picture was revealed at the Eighteenth Party Congress. The Mandate Commission listing the 1,569 delegates according to their occupations gave the following categories:

Party apparatus	659
Army, Navy and Ministry of the Interior	283
State administration and trade unions	162
Education, science, art, etc.	62
	—
	1,166
	—

This makes a total of 74.5 per cent. of avowed bureaucrats. The remaining 25.5 per cent. represented the middle class and workers and peasants.

Incidentally, it must be stressed that even if the proletariat did represent the strongest contingent at the congress the nature of the

régime would not be changed in the least. Real power in the Soviet Union has sufficient means at its disposal to admit as many supers as it likes to such congresses without the least risk, for, in any case, they have been reduced to the level of mere enthusiastic registration ceremonies. However, the fact that the dictatorship does not even bother to wear this proletarian cloak nowadays is a significant sign of the times. For the rest, the rare rank-and-file workers who receive the signal honour of being able to sit within less than 100 feet or so of the Father of the Peoples are destined to rise to higher rank with expedition.

How old-fashioned and rather ridiculously "1848" the Bolshevik Programme of 1917 seems to-day! Did not Lenin declare that the workers of the fields and the factories would henceforth be assured of more than 50 per cent. of the representation in any deliberative and legislative assembly?

The Petty Tyrants of the Village

The "socialization" of all aspects of life in the Soviet Union has so tremendously increased the role of bureaucracy that central control is often impossible. Local officials exploit the practical liberty of action left to them in this fashion to revenge themselves on those below for their own political servitude to the dictatorship. At the summit of the pyramid, the abuse of authority and ignorant incompetence upset merely the fate of society and the lives of the illustrious. History casts an eager eye on the revolutions of society and on the incidents of brilliant personal careers. But at the other end of the scale the misuse of power upsets only the daily lives of obscure citizens. It might just as well take on the same arbitrary forms as in the provinces of the old empire; public opinion is unmoved. The great ones of this world are the centre of public interest even in the petty misfortunes of their lives; the little people are excluded from interest and pity even in their greatest miseries. We do not propose to apologize for breaking with that age-old tradition for a while in order to establish a few facts relative to the domination of bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

The scarcest objects are those in greatest demand, and it is therefore not surprising that the Soviet Press has constant cause to denounce the misuse of authority to obtain housing accommodation. The *Leningradskaya Pravda* of March 23rd, 1938, introduces us to a high official named Khoklov. Having been sent to a certain town in the course of his profession, he rejects with disdain the housing accommodation offered, and sets out to find something suitable on his own. In one apartment house he finds just what he wants. The occupier, a certain Vassiliev, is an accountant who happens to have gone away on business, leaving his pregnant wife and two children behind. Khoklov gives the order for their ejection. Khoklov,

insatiable, also requisitions the room next door. The victims carry their complaint to the Public Prosecutor. But that gentleman is none other than Khoklov.

Peasants who have been forced into the *kolkhozes* against their will and compelled to surrender all their possessions to the *kolkhoz* are often subsequently expelled from it for the most trivial reasons. The situation grew so bad that on April 19th, 1938, the Soviet Government was compelled to promulgate a decree to curb the excesses. This action from on high produced the usual spate of revelations and denunciations.

"Religious conviction and the wearing of a long beard" no longer mean, as they did under Peter the Great, an admonition followed by a visit to the barber, but the beginning of a hopeless wandering from place to place, from gleaning to begging, from begging to robbery, from robbery to the Soviet equivalent of the hulks. The *Pravda*, Nos. 49 and 59 of 1938, tells us that a Buriat was expelled from a *kolkhoz* because his grandfather had been a lama 100 years before. In a single village thirty-two families were expelled on the same day (*Pravda*, No. 169 of 1938); in another village forty-five families (*Socialisticheskoe Zemledelie*, No. 114 of 1938); and in a third village seventeen families, because one of them had worked badly (*Ibid.*, No. 84 of 1938).

The mass purges inevitably recall the old mass expulsions of Jews by the provincial governors of most Christian monarchs:

"Last January a general purge took place in the forty-six *kolkhozes* of the region. Before the tribunal of the regional authorities filed old peasants, their wives, their children, their daughters-in-law, and their remote relatives—and each of them had to give an account of his life from the day he abandoned his napkins. After each confession the fate of the individual was decided by a simple vote. In many *kolkhozes* the purge was carried out in the absence of the peasants, and without even questioning them" (*Pravda*, No. 49 of 1938).

For transferring whole conquered populations without their consent, Hitler justly incurred the execration of the whole world. However, he was only copying methods used by the petty tyrants of Stalin against their own people:

"In the spring of 1937 vast territories had to be submerged in connection with the construction of the Moscow-Volga Canal, and the population of the villages in these areas had to be transferred elsewhere. The local authorities came to the conclusion that in some cases it would be easier just to transfer the population of one *kolkhoze* to another. The dispossessed *kolkhozes* protested, and to punish them the authorities confiscated all the belongings of the *kolkhozes* condemned to submersion, and to punish the ruined peasants they put them all into the category of 'casuals' [This

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definition is almost equivalent to an accusation of sabotage and counter-revolution.]” (*Pravda*, July 25th and August 3rd, 1937).

The *Izvestia* of July 20th and 29th, 1937, denounces brutality and ruthlessness of the same sort in connection with the *kolkhoze* ironically named “New Life.” The Socialist bureaucrats have even gone to the length of doing bourgeois business with members of the *kolkhozes* as merchandise, as witness the following account published in the *Pravda* of July 22nd, 1937:

“Peasants of a *kolkhoze* near Voronezh have protested in vain for about two years against the sale of their *kolkhoze*, ‘May the First.’ The *kolkhoze*, with all its possessions, both fixed and mobile, was sold to an industrial enterprise, which sold it again a month later to a factory, which sold it again a year later to the regional sanitary authorities. The dispossessed peasants pleaded that they should be given back the means of existence. The Provincial Soviet finally granted them the sum of 1,980 roubles to be divided between them as compensation, which sum meant a few dozen roubles each, counting only the adult workers.”

Certain dictators solemnly let their subjects vote from eight in the morning until six in the evening, after which the polling booths are closed and the officials inside count the votes and announce the required result. The procedure is expeditious, but it retains a certain outward form. Such form is considered miserably petty-bourgeois in the Soviet Union. Listen to the story published on March 11th, 1937, in the *Volgaya Kommuna*:

“Recently the members of the *kolkhoze* ‘Vittoria Piatiletka’ in the Kuibichev Region attended a general meeting to elect themselves a new President. A certain Dianov received the majority of the votes and was elected President. However, this result was displeasing to the representative of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party, Morozov. He called another general meeting, excluding a certain number of members of the *kolkhoze*, and then ordered the meeting to elect a new President. However, the members of the *kolkhoze* again elected Dianov. Morozov was furious at this defeat and he announced to the assembled members of the *kolkhoze*: ‘Very well. I’ll keep you here all night, but in the end you’ll do what I tell you.’ ”

It would seem that the arbitrariness of the bureaucrats is most oppressive in the villages; at least it is in the villages that the Soviet Press chiefly denounces such abuses, perhaps because illegal actions committed far from the centre are less clearly the responsibility of the Soviet power. It would take a whole book to describe the Golgotha of the Russian peasants burdened with State *corvée*, taxes and bureaucratic impositions which hardly permit them to breathe. The enormity of the offences we have quoted, even if they were isolated cases, is sufficient to indicate the whole extent of the

evil of which they are the symptoms. The abuse of authority has been common in all ages and in all places, but in a civilized State an unscrupulous official cannot go beyond certain limits, and he must disguise his exactions with an imposing display of precautions, manoeuvres and secret complicity. Even the most corrupt or foolish official in such a State would never even conceive the idea of physically and arbitrarily dispossessing the lawful occupant of a flat merely because he wanted it himself, of expropriating the property of whole populations by a mere word of command, of selling and re-selling the possessions of ordinary people without their knowledge, of arbitrarily quashing an official electoral result and imprisoning the entire electorate until it consented to do his will. Let but a single act of such a nature be not only conceived but executed, and you have beyond all question the political atmosphere of a country groaning under an all-powerful feudalistic bureaucracy.

Nothing is more tempting or more commonly practised than to belabour officials and civil servants. Their mode of existence, removed from physical effort and the ordinary battles of life, irritates all those—willing victims or adroit profiteers—for whom the jungle is the ideal society. We have no desire to howl with these wolves. If it is true that progress will gradually eliminate the drudgery of labour and the tribulations of the labourer, then in the last resort the whole of humanity will live in offices without incurring the least reproach. But even those who are not prepared to admit that security of employment is degrading must denounce the villainy and arbitrary brutality of the Soviet bureaucracy; they must even be amongst the first to do so. The denunciation is all the easier because a moment's reflection will show the connection between the evil and the poverty of the country, the lack of culture of its inhabitants and the obtuse and brainless discipline imposed by the dictatorship rather than with the character of bureaucracy as such. The incompetence of the bureaucrats demonstrates principally the immaturity of those whose affairs they administer and the baseness of their masters. The Bolsheviks have not succeeded in freeing the unfortunate Russian people from this double heritage. The bureaucrats are their official receivers in bankruptcy.

VIII

THE STANDARD OF LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

"Russia is an empire of catalogues; to read as a collection of titles it is superb. But take care you don't go beyond the titles!" Custine.

WRITING ON JULY 2ND, 1937, the *Pravda* declared roundly: "The standard of living of the whole working class in the Soviet Union is at a height unknown in Western Europe and America." Just that; no details. The *Correspondance Internationale* of November 2nd, 1937, published by the French Communist Party, assures us that "prices in 1937 are two and a half times lower than in 1932." And Molotov informed the Eighteenth Party Congress that "average wages have increased more than twofold as compared with 1932." Thus, according to the propaganda organs of Soviet Russia, working-class standards of life must have risen fivefold in the space of five years in the Soviet Union.

In view of such fantastic assertions and of the monstrous fashion in which public opinion outside the Soviet Union has been deceived in such a fundamental matter, we feel that public opinion is entitled to know all the sources and all the facts before it accepts the real truth. And thus we have made no attempt to shorten our analysis, particularly as a revelation of the truly miserable condition of the Soviet workers will illuminate many almost incredible facts set out in this book.

Scientific tradition demands that an analysis designed to reveal the standard of life of a people should deal with "normal" years, chosen in such a way as to avoid all exceptional disturbances, such as an economic crisis or, particularly, a war, affecting the issue. In order to abide by this fair condition, we have taken the years 1937 to 1940 as typical in the case of the Soviet Union. The Third Five-Year Plan began in this period; the resistance to collectivization had been overcome, and agricultural production stabilized, and finally, in 1935, prices had been made uniform. The general picture of that period as against any other necessarily favours the Stalinist régime, and since then there has been the immense and desolating destruction of the war years.

Soviet Food Standards in 1937

Let us first of all see, according to various sources of information, what the average monthly wage of a worker or clerical employee was in the Soviet Union in 1937:

	<i>Roubles</i>
<i>Planovoie Khoziaistvo</i> , No. 3, 1937, p. 163	250
Gosplan for 1937	218·8
<i>Moscow Journal</i> , March 2nd, 1937	225
<i>Moscow Journal</i> , October 2nd, 1937	242
<i>Planovoie Khoziaistvo</i> , 1937	250
<i>Courrier socialiste</i> , March 31st, 1939	242
<i>Bulletin économique</i> (Prokopovitch), December 11th, 1937	231
<hr/>	
Average monthly wage	240
<hr/>	

We have also applied the method of cross-checking to establish the level of food prices in 1937, and the results are shown in the following table. Since the establishment of "uniform prices" in the State shops there is usually a single price fixed by decree for a given commodity of a given quality in a given area. The chart on p. 185 shows the food prices for 1937 in roubles (per kilogram) and the following figures refer to various other kinds of consumption goods. The price of cigarettes was 2·6 roubles for twenty. A package of tobacco cost 0·50 roubles (*Leningradskaya Pravda*, August 3rd, 1937). A litre of milk cost from 1·4 to 1·6 roubles (*Ouralski Rabotchi*, July 17th, 1937). A kilogram of potatoes cost 0·4 roubles (Hubbard). A kilogram of herrings 6 to 10 roubles (Pasquier). A wireless three-to-four valve set cost from 850 to 1,000 roubles. A camera of the Kodak Junior type, 700 roubles. A motor-car, second-hand Citroën, 55,000 roubles. A gold watch from 1,500 to 3,200 roubles. An overcoat, 200 to 600 roubles. Shoes, 150 to 300 roubles a pair. Shirts, 25 to 40 roubles. Hats, 35 to 75 roubles. Dresses, 150 to 300 roubles. (According to Serge Pasquier, Hubbard, Basily, *Volgaya Kommuna* of April 1st, 1937, *Tikonkeanskaya Zverda* of January 14th, 1938.)

As can be seen from this list of prices, the purchasing power of the rouble in 1937 was approximately $2\frac{1}{4}d.$ at that time, whilst the average wage of 240 roubles represented about \$6 or 30s. in purchasing power. In order to fit this fundamental result into its historical place let us try to trace the standards of living in Russia during the past decade or so.

Sources	Wheat bread various qualities	Rye bread	Butter	Wheat flour	Sunflower- seed oil (per litre)	Buckwheat	Beef	Sugar	Eggs (per 10)	Pork and ham
<i>Legkaya Industriya</i> , March 3rd, 1937	1	0.85	16.05	2.90	—	2.50	—	4	—	—
<i>Izvestia</i> , July 28th, 1937 ..	1-1.50	0.85-1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9-12 (pork)
<i>Pravda</i> , July 3rd, 1937 ..	—	0.85	16-19.50	—	13-17.50	—	—	—	—	—
L. E. Hubbard, <i>Commerce and Distribution in the U.S.S.R.</i>	1	0.85	16.50	—	14.50	—	7.60	5	7.50	—
A. Pasquier, <i>Stakhanovisme</i>	1-1.50	0.85	16-17.50	—	15	—	8-9.60	6.50	6.50	18 (ham)
Prokopovitch, <i>Bulletin Eco- nomique</i> , December 11th, 1937	1	0.85	16.50	—	—	2.50	7.60	4	—	—
V. Serge, I (prices for the end of 1936)	—	0.90-1	14-18	—	—	2.10-4.30	7-8	—	—	9-12 (pork)
M. Yvon, I, II	1-1.70	0.85	16	—	13-14	4.30	6-9	4.70	—	—
<i>Daily Telegraph</i> , December ..xx, 1937	1.20	0.85	15-20	—	—	—	7-12.50	3.80-5	—	—
<i>Bulletin Quotidien</i> , August 6th, 1939 and June 13th, 1939	1-2	1	16.50	2.90	—	4	7.50	—	—	—
<i>Courrier Socialiste</i> , March 31st, 1939	1	—	16.50	2.90	—	—	7.60	—	—	—
Average	1-2	0.85	17	2.90	14.50	3	7.90	4.50	7	10.50 (pork) 18.50 (ham)

Soviet Food Standards during the Five-Year Plans (1928-40)

Average wages and average prices for each year (see tables on pp. 188 and 189), have been obtained by means of cross-checks in the same way as those for 1937 were arrived at.¹

Prices from 1930 to 1935 are those of rationed products on sale in the co-operatives. Decrees issued in January and September respectively fixed different prices for 1935, and in this case we have taken an average of the two. From 1936 to 1940 prices were made uniform by decree.

The commodities quoted for 1913 were of a quality very much superior to that prevailing under the Five-Year Plans. There were four sorts of wheaten bread available in 1937 varying in quality and price from 1.1 rouble for grey bread of poor quality to 4.9 roubles for high-quality white bread corresponding to French bread.

In any serious study of the standards of life of a people it is essential to take into account the extent to which the purchase of each commodity or product affects, on an average, a family budget. We will take a typical family food budget for an average month for a worker earning an average wage as provided by an inquiry made in 1928 (*Vers une nouvelle étape de la construction socialiste*, 1930, Vol. I, p. 280).

AVERAGE ADULT CONSUMPTION OF STAPLE FOODSTUFFS IN 1928

	Monthly	Daily
Black bread	4.53 kg.	150 gr.
Wheaten flour	8.52 kg.	285 gr.
Other cereals	0.99 kg.	33 gr.
Cabbage	4.07 kg.	130 gr.
Meat and bacon	4.9 kg.	162 gr.
Fish	1.1 kg.	36 gr.
Sugar	1 kg.	33 gr.
Butter	0.24 kg.	8 gr.
Oil	0.27 kg.	9 gr.
Potatoes	9.95 kg.	332 gr.
Milk	3 litres	0.1 litre
Eggs	2.5	0.08

¹ For the years 1929 to 1940: *Annual of Retail Prices*, Moscow, Tchogolev; *Planovoie Khoziaistvo*; *Legkaya Industriia*; *Pravda*; *Izvestia*; *Gestion Économique*; *Journal de Moscou*; Decrees of December 7th, 1934, and September 24th, 1935; Stalin, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Party Congresses; *Le Travail en U.R.S.S.*, Moscow, 1936, p. 96; F. Forest, 1943; and Peter Meyer, 1944. For 1928: Communication of the Scientific Bureau of the People's Commissariat for Labour to the I.L.O.; *Ekonomiticheskaya Obosrenie*, 1928, No. 12, and 1929, Nos. 2, 3; *Trud*, March 10th, 1929. For 1913: *Statistical Annual of 1913*; *Industria*, Moscow, 1923; *Bulletin Economique* of the Institut de Conjonctures, 1922, p. 4; Ignatiev, *Conjoncture et Prix*, Moscow, 1925.

The food of a worker certainly includes commodities not mentioned in the above list, but what we are out to discover in our *comparative* study of Soviet working-class food standards is what part of a worker's wages had to be paid out in different periods for the same quantity of the same staple foodstuffs. We have calculated prices from the average paid for these commodities in each year. The result of our calculations can be checked against the following table of wages and prices.

And important point to note for the years 1930 to 1935 is that the same goods were sold at various prices often differing quite considerably.

According to the *Sozialisticheskaya Vestni*, quoting the *Nouvelliste Social* of November 10th, 1935, Soviet workers purchased 97 per cent. of their food at co-operative prices in 1931, 89 per cent. in 1932, 85 per cent. in 1933, and 76 per cent. in 1934. The balance was purchased from the State shops or in the free market. The *Économie planifiée*, No. 8 of 1935, p. 93, and the *Legkaya Industriya* of March 9th, 1937, both indicate that prices on the free market were from ten to fifteen times as high as those in the co-operatives, whilst prices in the State shops were two and three times as high as those in the co-operatives. For these years we have taken into account the proportion of foodstuffs purchased at higher prices in the State shops and on the free market, giving a coefficient of 1.5 for 1932 prices, 1.7 for 1933 prices, and 1.9 for 1934 prices based on the preceding figures. In this way we obtain the following table showing us the cost of the same quantity of the same group of staple foodstuffs at various periods:

WAGES AND FOODSTUFF PRICES FOR 1913 (CZARIST RÉGIME), FOR 1928 (END OF THE N.E.P.) AND FOR THE YEARS 1930 TO 1940

(FIVE-YEAR PLAN PERIODS)

Year	1913	1928	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Average monthly wage in roubles	28	70	115	127	148	186	225	240	270	315	350
Cost of same monthly provisions as indicated (in roubles)	5	11.5	32.6	66.4	91.8	101.1	102.6	104.5	115	127	138

If we take 100 as the basis representing the year 1928 we get the following table of relative wage and price developments throughout these same years:

Year	1913	1928	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Wage index	40	100	164	181	211	265	321	342	385	475	505
Index of food prices	43.5	100	283.5	577	798	879	892	909	1000	1100	1200

The following graph, Fig. 1, represents the divergent trends of wages and prices implicit in the preceding tables. The development of

WAGES AND PRICES IN 1913, IN 1928, AND DURING THE FIVE-YEAR PLANS (IN ROUBLES)

Year	Wages	Wheat bread	Rye bread	White flour	Black flour	Beef	Butter	Lump sugar	Sunflower- seed oil	Potatoes	Eggs (per 10)
1913	28	0.10	0.06	0.12	0.06	0.33	1	0.35	0.32	0.025	0.20
1925-6	56	—	—	0.23	0.12	0.71	1.99	0.70	0.59	0.05	—
1928	70	0.23	0.10	0.23	0.18	0.87	2.45	0.62	0.65	0.06	0.60
1931	96	0.14- 0.25	0.11	—	—	1.80	3	0.80	—	—	0.70
1932	115	0.175- 0.350	0.125	0.19	0.14	2.12	4.66	0.95	1.70	0.07	1.00
1933	127	0.60	0.50	0.72	0.66	3 4	7	2.40	2.60	0.15	1.80
1934	148	1.25	0.75	1.40	1.30	3.28	8	2.50	2.70	0.25	3.50
1935	186	2 1.70	1.15 0.85	3.80 1.80 average 2.80	3.50 1.60	7.60	12.50 17.50	4.60 4.75	13.50	0.55 0.35	5 5.50
1936	225	1.85	0.90	2.4.90 average 2.85	2.10	7.80	18.50	4.20	13.50	0.35	6.50
1937	240	1.10	0.85	2.90	2	7.90	17	4.50	14.50	0.40	7
1938	270	1.20	0.85	2.90	—	8.50	18	—	—	0.60-1	—
1940	350	1.70	1	2.90	—	16	28	5.50	14.50	1.20	6.50

Year	Milk per litre	Buckwheat	Tea	Cabbage	Cotton cloth per metre	Woolen cloth per metre	Shoes per pair	Soap per tablet	Petrol per litre	Dress cotton and cloth	Overcoat cotton and cloth
1913	0.10	0.13	—	0.08	0.18	3.26	5.45	60 per cent. fat, 0.28	0.096	—	—
1925-6	—	—	—	—	0.83	9.52	18	—	—	—	—
1928	0.25	0.25	6.30	0.20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1931	0.70	—	—	—	—	—	15	—	—	65	—
1932	0.70	0.30	—	0.25	—	—	—	—	0.22	—	—
1933	1	0.60	—	0.30	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1934	Co-op., 1 5	0.80	Free market 120	0.35	—	—	50	10 per cent. fat, 2	0.47	200	—
1935	1.50	3.4.30	70-100	0.40	—	—	75-170	10 per cent. fat, 3.80	—	250-600	250-600
1936	1.50	2.80-4.30, average, 3.50	70-100	0.50	7.25	190	100-200	10 per cent. fat, 1.30-2.70	0.47	150-600	250-600
1937	1.50	2.50-4.30	60-120	0.60	4-10	50-200	150-300	10 per cent. fat, 1.55	—	200-1,000	200-650
1938	—	—	—	1.80-2.50	—	—	—	—	—	650	650
1940	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

prices is represented by the plain line and the development of wages by the dotted line.

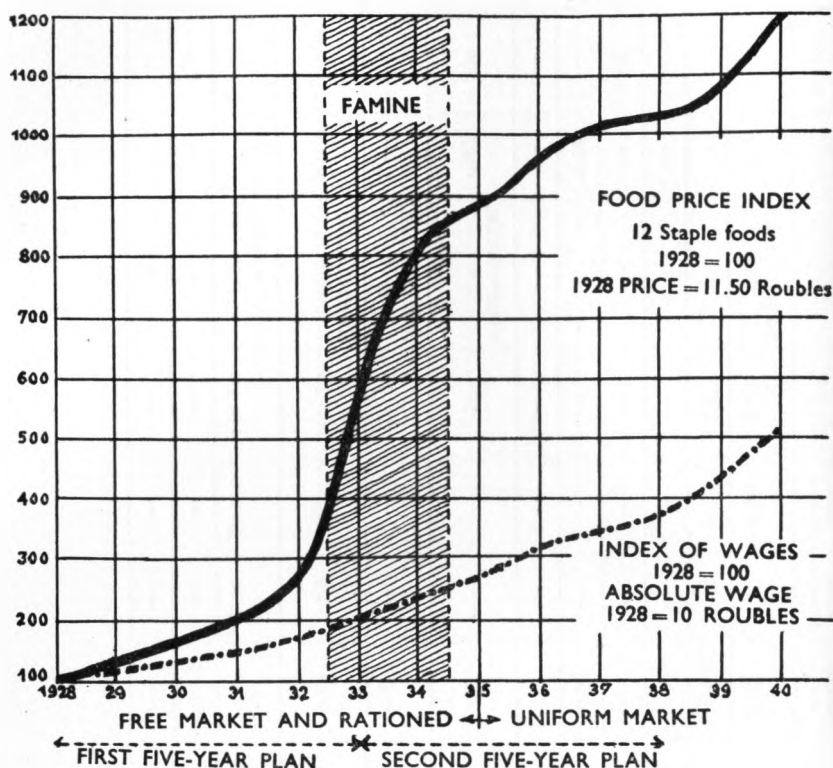


FIG. 1.

As we can see from this graph, prices increased much faster than wages during the period of the first two Five-Year Plans, and the standards of life of the average wage-earner in the Soviet Union, that is to say of the great masses of the people, deteriorated considerably. The following graph, Fig 2, designed from the relation of wage and price indexes, gives us a picture of what the opening of the wages-prices scissors meant to the Soviet worker in respect of his food standards.

The graphic curve clearly indicates an enormous drop in food standards, particularly in the years 1932 and 1933 (the time of the famine), when *living standards dropped to one quarter of the 1928 level*. Standards have risen only comparatively little since then, and working-class standards in the Soviet Union in 1938 were only 40 per cent. of those prevailing in the last year of the N.E.P. It was only in 1939 and 1940, the two years which preceded the

attack on the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany, that ordinary people seem to have attained a halfway tolerable food standard again, though it was still very much inferior to that of "the good old days."

We must point out here that our group of staple foodstuffs as purchased by an average wage-earner includes 8.5 kilograms of wheaten flour. Now, if instead of taking the price of wheaten flour we had taken that of wheaten bread, food standards would have appeared slightly better—namely, 27 per cent. in 1934 and 43 per cent. in 1938 as compared with 1928. That is because the price of bread, which was more or less the same as that of flour in 1928,

FOOD STANDARD CHANGES, 1928-40

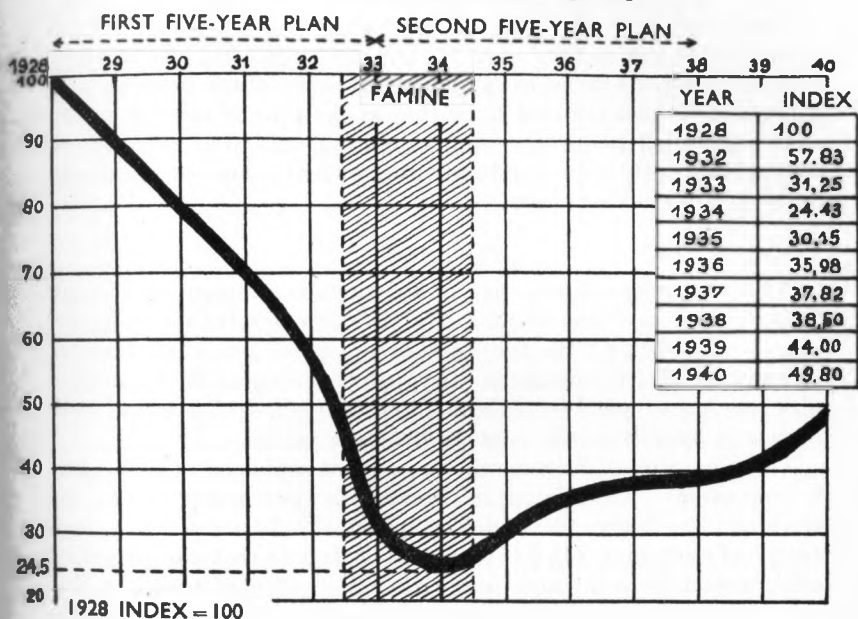


FIG. 2.

and exactly the same in 1913, dropped considerably below the price of flour in the years of the Five-Year Plans. In the years 1937-8 the price of flour was 2.5 times higher than the price of bread. It is not that the price of bread is controlled whilst that of flour is uncontrolled, because all prices are fixed by the State at more or less arbitrary levels. All that can be said is that the State derives less profit from the sale of bread than from the sale of flour. This is due to the necessity of assuring at least a vital minimum of bread for the poorest sections of the workers.

The establishment of uniform prices in 1935 fixed prices well below those which had previously prevailed on the free market,

but well above those which had previously prevailed in the co-operatives, where the workers bought most of their requirements. This latter price increase varied from 150 per cent. to 350 per cent., according to commodity. Wages were increased by 10 per cent. only. In consequence, the standard of life of the working masses, who buy most of their foodstuffs in the co-operatives, fell by comparison with the average level indicated for 1935, whilst it rose for those who were accustomed to purchase most, if not all, of their requirements on the free market. The price reform of 1935 meant a loss in purchasing power for holders of food cards—that is to say, for the great mass of workers and clerical employees. This deplorable situation lasted only eight months and then a decree issued in September lowered the prices fixed by the January decree.

The living standards of the masses of workers in the Soviet Union were never so low as they were in the years 1933, 1934 and in 1935 up to October. As far as the standards of living of the peasants are concerned we can say succinctly that at the time of the famine in 1932-3 they fell below the vital minimum, and that even when they subsequently improved they still remained below the standards of the urban working class.

The Evidence

Numerous economists arrive at the same conclusions. Hubbard gives a drop in living standards a trifle greater than our figure because he operates on the basis of the price per kilo of seven "most-consumed commodities." In 1936 the prices of these commodities were 317 per cent. above those of 1932, whilst wages had increased by only 94 per cent. in the same period.

The admission of Friedmann, an eminent supporter of Stalinism, is important: "Calculated in bread, the purchasing power of working-class wages decreased considerably between 1928 and 1933" (Friedmann, G., II, p. 69). The fact is that the prices of other foodstuffs rose much more than the price of bread in the same period, so that the conclusions to be drawn from Friedmann's admission are identical to our own. It must be added, to give a more exact idea of the misery of the Russian workers, that in the years 1926-8 living standards were very little above those of the years before the 1914 war, a fact which Friedmann also confirms.

Victor Serge quotes the statement of a mechanic, a "shock brigader," in 1933: "I earn 270 roubles, but I live much worse than I did in 1926, when I received only 27 roubles unemployment pay." In March, 1932, correspondents wrote from Russia to the *Revolution Prolétarienne*: "Everyone lives much worse now than in the years 1926-7. . . . We no longer have the N.E.P. and we no longer have unemployment, but we are all short of everything."

Marcel Yvon, who worked in the Soviet Union for eleven years,

declares: "In the years 1925-7, the last years of the N.E.P., food standards were even better than before the war. Since then they have fallen considerably and the whole population is affected, and not even the oldest can remember such widespread and universal distress" (Marcel Yvon, I).

The Comparison with 1913

According to the *Bulletin of the International Labour Office* of March 10th, 1930, the cost of living index of a minimum budget (thirty-three essential products) was 227.9 in 1928-9, and the index of wages was 258 (taking the 1913 level as 100). Thus in 1928 living standards were 111, as compared with 100 in 1913. Our own researches (see the tables of prices and wages for 1913 and 1928, pp. 188-9) suggest a figure of 108, a figure not materially different. As living standards in the Soviet Union in the years 1931 to 1940 remained between 25 per cent. and 40 per cent. of their 1928 level, it is clear that during the period of the three Five-Year Plans the food standards of the Soviet workers remained constantly very much below those of the workers of Czarist Russia in 1913, and in 1940 Soviet working-class food standards were only 55 per cent. of the Czarist standards of 1913.

This drop in food standards, which must appear almost unbelievable, is confirmed by numerous authoritative sources, including Yourievsky (*Posledni Novosti* of April 4th, 1939), Basily, Sir Walter Citrine, Barmine, Salomon, Schwartz, etc. Professor Prokopovitch, the Editor of the *Economic Bulletin*, comes to the conclusion that Soviet standards of living in 1937 were 30 per cent. inferior to those of 1913. There is very little difference between that figure and our own.

Living Standards for Manufactured Products

Similar research demonstrates that standards of life in the Soviet Union in respect of manufactured products, so-called consumption goods, have fallen even lower than is the case with foodstuffs. The necessity of assuring at least a vital minimum of food consumption to the masses went some way to curb the rise in the prices of foodstuffs. No such curb operated to control the price of manufactured goods, and workers just went without when their prices were exorbitant.

Here is proof of this fact: On an average in 1928-9 a citizen spent 4.6 roubles a month on textile goods and footwear (*Vers une nouvelle Etape de la construction socialiste*, 1930, Vol. I, p. 280). In 1936 the same quantity of articles cost 55.62 roubles; thus between 1928 and 1936 the price of clothing had increased 12.3-fold, whilst the price of foodstuffs had increased only 8.9-fold. Let us recall that in the same period wages increased 3.2-fold. Thus with his

1928 wages a Soviet worker could buy approximately four times as many manufactured goods and 2.7 times as much food as he could with his 1936 wages.

That part of the wages of a Soviet worker which was not spent on foodstuffs and on manufactured goods went primarily in rent and taxes.

As far as the famous "social wage" is concerned—that is to say, medical attention, paid holidays, maternity assistance, culture and so on—which, according to Stalinist propagandists, goes far to augment the real wages of the Soviet worker, later chapters of this book will demonstrate that, compared with respective population figures, it is considerably lower in the Soviet Union than in the "bourgeois" countries of Western Europe and America. In addition, as we have already seen in the chapter dealing with the Soviet bureaucracy, the first to profit, and substantially to profit, from the advantages in kind dispensed by the Soviet Government are the higher-placed bureaucrats and a certain number of Stakhanovite workers.

The achievements of social security available to the great masses of the people in the Soviet Union can hardly be called "advantages" if we are to believe the following description revealed in a bout of self-criticism:

"No sort of regimen is enforced at the sanatorium for consumptives at Lesiayevsk. Any patient can return to the sanatorium at any hour of the night he wishes. For that matter, the doors have no keys, and the belongings of the patients disappear in consequence. Try to get a real night's sleep under such circumstances. . . . For anyone with a normal appetite, dinner is a purgatory. Assume that you have eaten your soup. Then you can wait for thirty or forty minutes, the time it takes for the crockery to come back. Incidentally, this 'crockery' consists entirely of cups and bowls of terra-cotta. The menu consists always of cabbage soup and millet dishes. As far as meat and fat are concerned, they come on the table with suspicious irregularity. . . . The attempts of the patients to get X-ray treatment are in vain. 'How do you expect us to use X-ray treatment,' explain the doctors, 'when the sanatorium hasn't even got ordinary electric current?' " (*Izvestia*, July 5th, 1946).

Direct Taxation and Miscellaneous Imposts

The following is a brief list of the various social and political obligations imposed on the Soviet worker and paid out of his wages:

According to the *Correspondance Internationale* of November 2nd, 1937, the first charge on wages is an income tax of 2.5 per cent. Wages below 150 roubles a month are exempt from this tax, a proof that there must be quite a lot of workers who earn much

less than the 240 roubles we have assumed as the average wage for 1937.

Cultural dues vary between 2 per cent. and 3.5 per cent. (*Ibid.*).

State loans vary from 8 per cent. to 10 per cent. (*Za Industrializatsiu* of September 12th, 1935, and the *Izvestia* of July 2nd and August 6th, 1936).

Trade union dues: 2 per cent., later 1 per cent.

Thus total direct taxation of various sorts amounts to between 14 per cent. and 17 per cent. of the total wages of a Soviet worker.

But that is not all; in addition there is a host of "voluntary" contributions, and each citizen is under a moral obligation to subscribe his share to at least two or three of them. The following is a short list:

Insurance, 1 per cent. of the total wages. Factory publications and pamphlets, 5 per cent. Housing co-operative, 12 per cent. to 25 per cent. (this latter promises preferential housing accommodation and is subscribed largely by higher-salaried officials). Ossoaviakhim (for the furtherance of the military, chemical and aero industries), 0.25 per cent. to 2 per cent. Village relief, 0.5 per cent. International Red Aid, 1 per cent. to 1.5 per cent. Autodar (for the building of motor roads), 0.25 per cent. Communist Party, 1.5 per cent. Five-Year Plan subscription, 5 per cent. Physical culture, 7 per cent. to 10 per cent. And, in addition, diverse others at all times. See *Za Industrializatsiu* of September 12th, 1935, and *Izvestia* of July 2nd and August 6th, 1936.

In this way the ordinary Soviet worker is under an obligation to return between 18 per cent. and 22 per cent. of his wages to the State in the form of official taxes and social obligations of all sorts.

He pays 10 per cent. of his wages for rent and light, and another 3 per cent. to 5 per cent. for the cooking of his food and for warmth (the climate is, of course, often very rigorous in the Soviet Union). Together with all the tax and social obligations mentioned, this amounts to between 30 per cent. and 35 per cent. of his wages. As in 1937 he spent 63 per cent. of his wages on food (the group of staple foodstuffs taken by us for the purpose of our calculations represents only a part of what he actually spends on food), *only between 1 per cent. and 7 per cent. of his wages remained to him for all other purposes*: fares, hygiene, leisure, clothing, household goods and so on. In 1928 he spent between 23 per cent. and 25 per cent. on such items. Thus we have here another indication of the very considerable drop in working-class living standards in the Soviet Union during the period of the Five-Year Plans.

These figures, be it noted, represent an average, and they are valid for the great mass of the Soviet people. The privileged groups who receive much higher wages or salaries spend a much greater proportion of their income on manufactured goods and on pleasures.

This is a circumstance which operates equally in all countries all over the world. That is why the more impoverished the masses of the population are in any given country, the greater is that part of their income which is spent on food. It is interesting to observe graphically the varying percentages of total wages paid by the Russian people for food, represented on the accompanying graph as the black part of the annual columns. The relative length of the white parts of the annual columns indicates the proportions spent on manufactured goods and on leisure. A comparison shows the enormous drop in Soviet living standards during the period of the Five-Year Plans, which we have already pointed out.

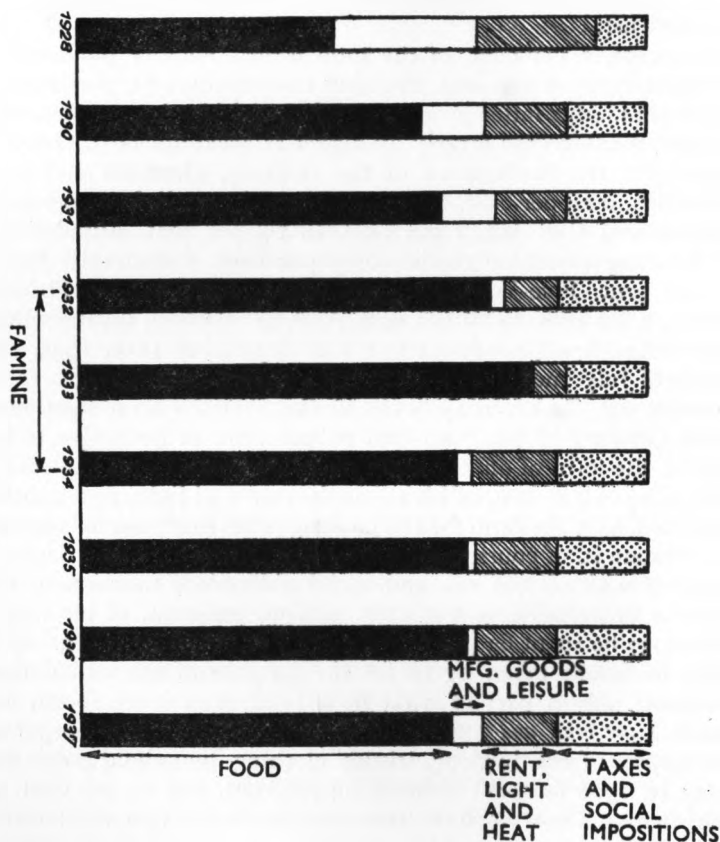


Fig. 3. Proportion of wages spent on: food=black; manufactured goods and leisure=white; rent, etc.=hatched; taxes, etc.=stippled.¹

¹ Sources: From 1930 to 1937: *Labour in the Soviet Union*, pp. 342-3; Prokopovitch, *Quarterly Bulletin of Soviet Economy*; and Basily. For 1928: *Soviet Statistical Review*, No. 5 of 1927 and No. 5 of 1928; and the *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*, Moscow, February, 1929.

Low Wage Standards

Up to the present we have discussed only the anonymous "average wage," the only figure which is modestly mentioned in material destined for foreign consumption. However, this gives far too "statistical" a view of the life of the Russian workers. When the Communist Parties in other countries indignantly denounce the exploitation of the working classes, they quote the low wages paid to this or that category of workers in this or that industry, and take good care not to operate with the scientific "average wage" of all workers; and still less do they adopt the custom in vogue in Soviet Russia of striking an average of workers and clerical employees' wages, and engineers' and directors' salaries all lumped in together. The statistical corrective brought about by the well-being of the few does not serve to ameliorate the misery of the many. We therefore propose to examine a little more closely the fate of that lower and disinherited section of the Soviet workers.

The *Pravda* of February 15th, 1936, admits that millions of workers earn only 100 roubles a month and some of them even less. *Za Industrializatsiu* of June 9th, 1936, quotes wages of 125 roubles a month paid to skilled metal-workers, and *Trud* of June 26th, 1936, and April 14th, 1938, mentions wages of 100 roubles a month paid to peat-workers. The *Bulletin of the Central Council of Soviet Labour Unions*, No. 5 of 1938, refers to wages of from 130 to 165 roubles a month paid to shorthand typists and secretaries in 1938.

A decree of November, 1937, issued by the Council of Peoples Commissars of the Soviet Union and published in the *Izvestia* of November 2nd, 1937, grants an increase in wages to lower-paid workers so that the minimum wage shall be not less than 110 roubles a month or 115 roubles on piece-work. At the same time it officially confirms the fact (by oversight?) that the decree affects approximately 5,000,000 workers. The *Krokodil* of January 11th, 1938, and *Sovietskaya Sibir* of February 1st, 1938, both write that, despite this decree, many workers continued to receive wages below the legal minimum.

For the rest, the very high salaries incorporated in Soviet statistics falsify the average wage as it is understood in the West, where it refers only to the wages of workers and clerical employees. If we take into account that the privileged groups and the Stakhanovites represent about 15 per cent. of all wage-earners, and that they receive an average monthly wage of 720 roubles, then it is clear that the remaining 85 per cent. of those employed must share only 55 per cent. of the total wage fund. This 85 per cent. did not earn an average wage of 240 roubles in 1937, but an average wage of

155 roubles, and this is the normal average for the mass of Soviet workers.

It should be pointed out that during the years of rationing (1930-5) lower wages enjoyed a certain advantage thanks to the lower prices charged in the co-operatives in which they were largely spent. This fact has been taken into account in our calculations. From 1935 onwards prices were made uniform, with the result that afterwards a worker's standard of life was in exact relation to his earnings.

The rise in the general level of life shown in the curve between 1935 and 1940 is a real one, but it is due in great part to the growth of social differentiation; the income of the privileged groups having grown much more rapidly than that of the masses. The demand for luxury goods is, as we have seen in the chapter on the bureaucracy, much more adequately satisfied than the requirements of the poorer strata, who live in chronic penury even with regard to the prime necessities of existence.

Low Quality Standards

The quantity of products obtainable with a given wage is not in itself sufficient to define the standard of living. We must also take note of quality. It is not easy to set up an "index of quality," but we can give some idea of what is involved by recalling that before the war certain enterprises in Europe specialized in producing rather shoddy goods on a mass scale to meet the requirements of lower income levels. Now at their worst such enterprises never produced articles of such inferior quality as the Russians ordinarily have to put up with.

Rudzutak, a former member of the Political Bureau, has admitted openly that the majority of the articles manufactured in the Soviet Union are almost useless. Thousands of complaints about the deplorably low level of quality in Soviet manufactured goods have found their way into the columns of the Soviet Press. According to *Za Industrializatsiu*, "the quality of cotton goods is so poor that resistance to washing is 66 per cent. below normal." A tremendous proportion of the electric-light bulbs manufactured in the Soviet Union give no more than a couple of days' service. Certain categories of boots and shoes are completely worn out after a month's use.

The problem is so serious that Stalin himself had to take the matter up, and at the Eighteenth Party Congress he threatened "severe measures against all comrades who infringed the Soviet laws of quality." However, even such threats have brought about no improvement, and the *Izvestia* of September 8th, 1935, writes indignantly of the quality of babies' clothes produced, whilst the *Pravda* of June 21st, 1939, refers ironically to pants with different

coloured legs, cups which won't hold liquid, boxes of matches which won't light, and vermicelli "which sticks together in blocks so solid that they are impossible to break without the aid of a hatchet."

Food is often of poor and even bad quality. *Trud* of January 8th, 1939, complains that half the potatoes offered for sale are mouldy; the *Volgaskaya Kommuna*, No. 89 of 1936, complains of "foreign bodies in the bread, such as iron filings, lumps of salt, and coagulated grease." The *Pravda* of December 19th, 1939, tells us that the bread found too bad for sale in Moscow is disposed of outside the town, and adds:

"The swindlers who infest the bakeries exceed the permitted degree of humidity in order to increase the weight of the bread, and then these frauds announce in their reports that the plan for bread production has been exceeded."

Writing in the *Izvestia* on March 11th, 1934, Mejlauk sums up the situation: "Our industry is in a vicious circle; the more shoes and material we produce the quicker they are worn out."

In order to arrive at a fair comparison between the standard of life in the consumption of manufactured goods of the Soviet worker and that of his more fortunate colleague in western Europe we should have to deduct a big percentage to reflect the poor quality of Soviet manufactured goods and their consequent swift rate of deterioration. But in reality by far the greater part of a Soviet worker's wage goes to buy food, often of inferior quality, of low palatability and part spoiled, though such products, by their very quantity, must serve to satisfy his bare hunger. In consequence, infectious stomach troubles are widespread, often developing into grave epidemics with frequently fatal results.

But death is a matter of very little consequence in the Soviet Union.

Soviet Housing Conditions

The fall in living standards which we have seen take place during the period of the Five-Year Plans in the Soviet Union has operated on all fields. Let us take the question of housing conditions.

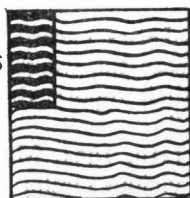
The living space available per head in square metres was 8 in 1913, 5.8 in 1923, 5.9 in 1928, 4.7 in 1935 and 4.3 in 1937. Fig. 4 gives us a graphic illustration of the situation in 1913, 1928 and 1937. To make the picture still clearer, an ordinary single-size bed has been introduced into each space on the same scale. In interpreting the graph it must be remembered that the space available includes not only actual room space, but also corridors, kitchens, rest-rooms, etc.

After a glance at this graph we can better appreciate an expression which has become very common in Soviet Russia—namely, that each person has housing accommodation "the size of a coffin."

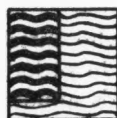
It is not far from reality. The Soviet State has sacrificed everything to the building up of heavy industries, and it has never made any serious attempt to solve its terrible housing problem.

In Czarist Russia available housing surface increased by 41 per cent. between 1904 and 1914. From 1928 to 1937 available housing surface increased by only 31 per cent. For 2 million new inhabitants the Soviet State provided no more than 50 million square metres of housing space—that is to say, 2.3 square metres per person.

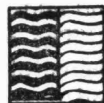
SAME SCALE
SINGLE BED
1 METRE \times 2 METRES



1913 = 8 m. ²



1928 = 5.9 m. ²



1937 = 4.3 m. ²

FIG. 4. Housing surface (in square metres) available per person in Czarist and Soviet Russia.¹

The least constructional work undertaken by the Soviet Government, whether it be a factory, a canal or a dam, is praised to the skies and offered as indisputable proof of the excellence of the Soviet régime. In truth, however, less is done for the well-being of the masses in "the Fatherland of the Proletariat" than in any bourgeois country. Let us compare this 50 million square metres of housing space in the Soviet Union, spread over a period of nine years, with what has been done elsewhere. Take Great Britain, in four years, from 1925 to 1928 inclusive, 70 million square metres was provided for a population about one-quarter that of the Soviet Union—that is to say, about twelve times as much per person per year. Much the same achievement has been recorded in the United States, France, Belgium and so on, but nowhere have these achievements been displayed to canvass the admiration of the world.

If we subject rents paid to a "coefficient of value," taking into account the size and quality of the housing available, we shall find that the Soviet workers are much more exploited by their Soviet State than the British, French and American workers are by their capitalist landlords.

Soviet Standards as compared with Other Countries

The group of staple foodstuffs we used for the purposes of our demonstration cost 150 francs in Paris in 1937, but that included French white bread instead of Russian black bread, ground-nut

¹ Sources: *Annales Russes*, Paris, December, 1938; *Bulletin of the International Labour Office*, May, 1932; and *Izvestia*, January 20th, 1935 (report of Komarov).

oil instead of sunflower oil, and dried vegetables instead of Russian *kacha*. Prices of French commodities were furnished by the *Bulletin of the International Labour Office* and the *Statistique Générale de la France*. The accompanying graph shows us that in 1937 our group of staple foodstuffs cost a French worker one-tenth of his wages, whilst in the same period it cost the Soviet worker almost half of his.

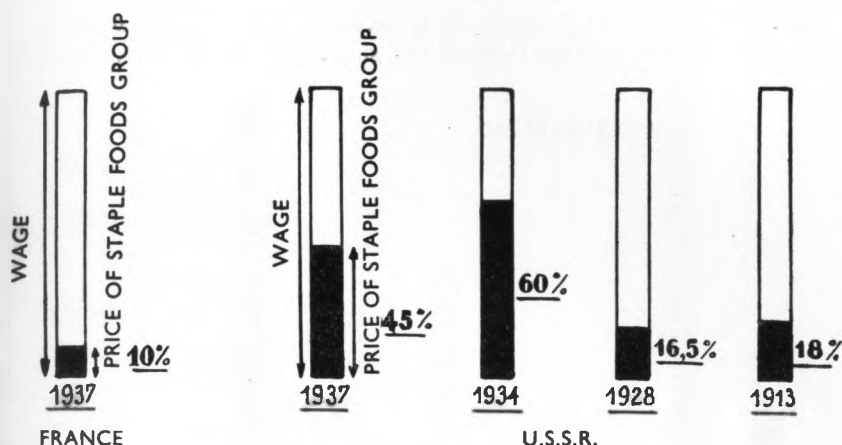


FIG. 5. Wage proportions spent on staple foodstuffs by French and Russian workers.

Let us remember that this group of staple foodstuffs constitutes only a Russian sample used exclusively for the purposes of comparison, and that it does not represent the total of foodstuffs actually consumed each month in each of the two countries. In the year in question, the French worker consumed on an average a quantity of foodstuffs equivalent to five times the quantity represented by our group of staple foodstuffs, whilst in the same year the Soviet worker consumed roughly the equivalent of 1.4 times the quantity only.

Let us now examine the relation between the living standards of the Soviet worker and those of his colleague in other countries still more closely.

Let us imagine for the sake of comparison that the total average wage of a French worker and the total average wage of a Soviet worker were spent on one commodity only. Taking this one commodity to be bread, we find that in 1937 a French worker could have bought 600 kilograms of the best quality white bread, whilst the Russian worker could have bought only 218 kilograms of a bread much inferior in quality. The accompanying graphs show us just how much bread, meat, oil, butter and sugar a French worker and a Russian worker could have obtained respectively if each had spent his monthly wages exclusively on that particular item.

There is another way of broaching this problem of comparative standards of life which ought to appeal particularly to Marxists, who regard labour as the measure of all value, and that is to measure living standards by the amount of labour time a worker must work in order to obtain specific goods. Since the exploitation of the workers—that is to say, the appropriation of “surplus value” by the employer—is said to have ceased in the Soviet Union, whilst, according to Soviet propagandists, the share of the Russian workers in the social product has “passed and surpassed” that of the workers

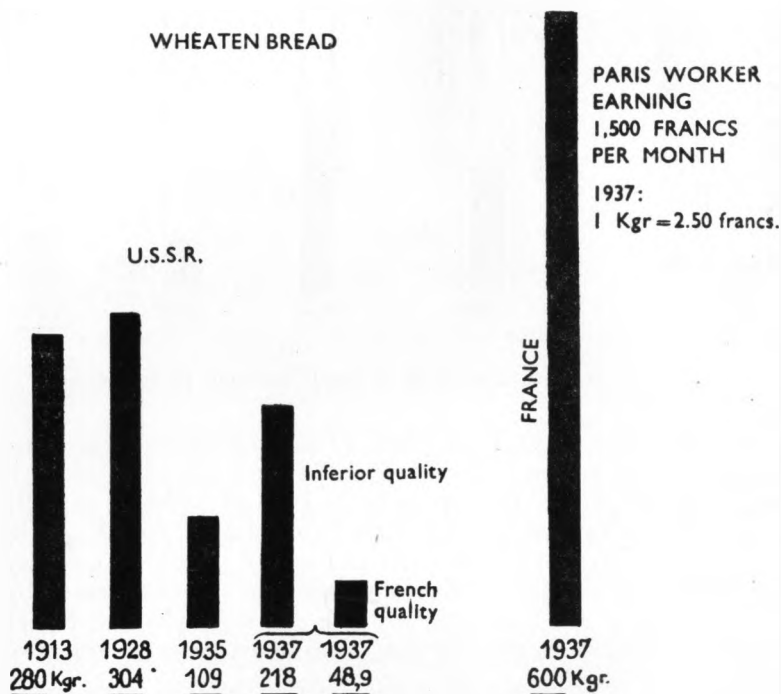


FIG. 6. Monthly wages translated into bread for Russian and French workers.

in capitalist countries, it is not unreasonable to assume that the quantity of products the Soviet worker receives in exchange for his labour is greater than that received by the worker in capitalist countries. In reality, however, the contrary is the truth: the Russian worker has to work much longer in order to obtain the same quantity of products (not to mention the question of quality). In other words, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the degree of labour exploitation in the Soviet Union is higher than in the capitalist countries of Europe and America.

BUTTER

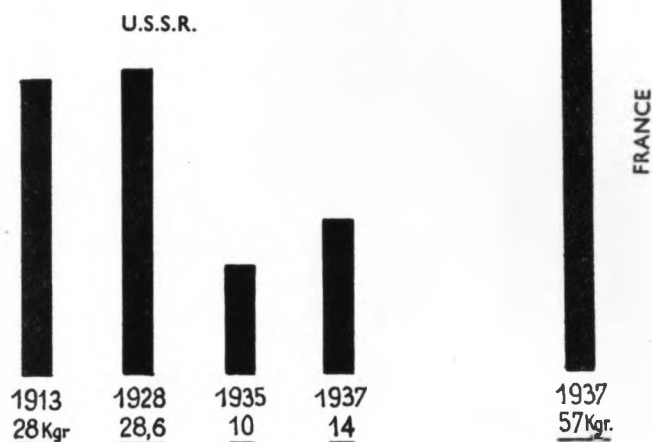


FIG. 7 (a).

BEEF

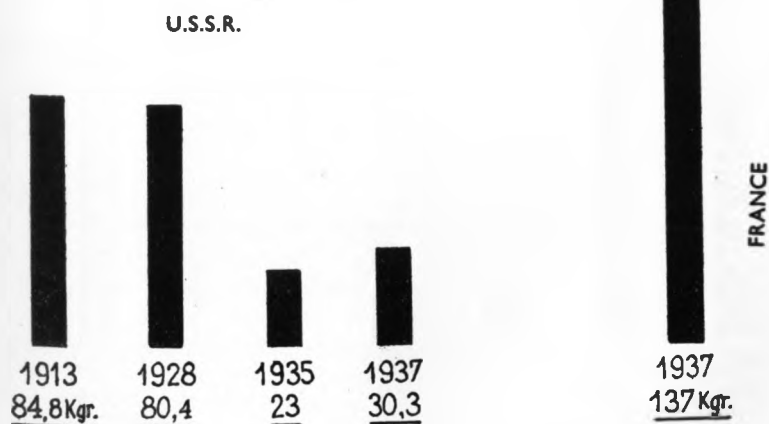


FIG. 7 (b).

SUGAR

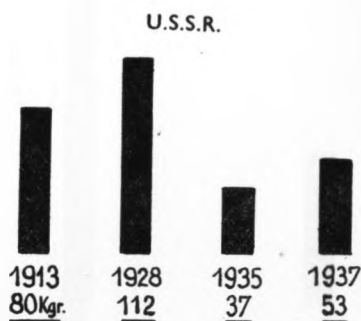


FIG 7 (c).

1937
336 Kgr.

FRANCE

SUNFLOWER-SEED OIL

U.S.S.R.

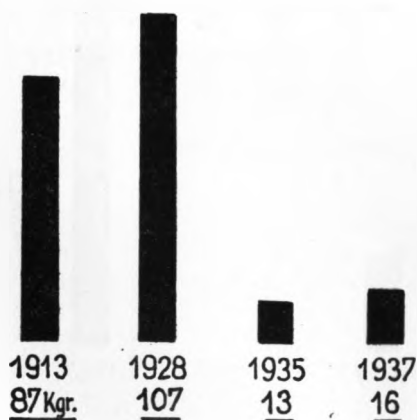


FIG. 7 (d).

1937
188 Kgr.

GROUND-NUT OIL

FRANCE

FIG. 7 (a-d). Monthly wages translated into butter, beef, sugar and oil for Russian and French workers.

In the Soviet Union in the pre-war period under review a month was divided into five weeks of six days each, though in July, 1940, the normal seven-day week was reintroduced. The Soviet worker had one day's rest a week, so that he worked five days in succession, each working day being of seven hours' duration. Thus in the course of a month he worked 175 hours, or 10,500 minutes. In 1935 the average worker earned a wage of 180 roubles a month—that is to say, 0.017 roubles a working minute—whilst a manual worker receiving 100 roubles a month earned 0.0095 roubles a minute. For the purposes of our calculation, the unemployment support paid to a French unemployed worker in a month is calculated on a basis of 192 hours, the average monthly working time in France in 1935 and at the beginning of 1936, and on a basis of 170 hours for the rest of 1936 and for 1937—that is to say, after the introduction of the forty-hour week.

Another point to be noted is that the French unemployed worker could suspend payment of rent and that he was exempt from direct taxation and trade-union and party dues, which was not the case with the Russian worker.

NUMBER OF MINUTES' WORK NECESSARY TO BUY A KILOGRAM OF VARIOUS FOODSTUFFS FOR RUSSIAN AND FRENCH WORKERS IN OCTOBER, 1935

Product	In the Soviet Union		In France			
	Skilled worker	Manual labourer	Unemployed worker		Manual Labourer	Skilled Worker
	Monthly wage, 180 roubles	Monthly wage, 100 roubles	Single Monthly 330 fr.	With wife and one child 525 fr.	Monthly wage, 800 fr.	Monthly wage, 1,200 fr.
Wheaten bread	100	180	60	35	25	16
Beef	447	800	270	170	110	75
Potatoes	20	35	35	22	15	10
Butter	1,030	1,850	640	400	260	170
Oil	800	1,400	220	130	90	60
Sugar	280	500	180	80	50	35
Rice	360	640	105	65	45	30

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above table and that on p. 206:

1. The Moscow labourer must work from seven to nine times as long as a French labourer in order to be able to buy 1 kilogram of wheaten bread, meat, butter or sugar; from fourteen to fifteen times as long for 1 kilogram of oil or rice; and from ten to fifteen times as long for clothing, footwear and furniture.

2. The average worker in the Soviet Union must work seven times as long as the average worker in France in order to be able to buy himself 1 kilogram of all the seven foodstuffs we have listed above.

3. The social inequality between the manual labourer and the skilled worker in the Soviet Union is much greater than the corresponding difference in France.

4. A skilled worker in the Soviet Union has a standard of life which is inferior on an average to that of the unemployed worker in receipt of unemployment relief in France.

NUMBER OF HOURS' WORK NECESSARY TO BUY ONE OF THE
MANUFACTURED GOODS LISTED FOR RUSSIAN AND FRENCH WORKERS
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR 1936

Articles	In the Soviet Union		In France		
	Skilled man	Labourer	Labourer	Unemployed workman	
	monthly wage 225 roubles	Monthly wage 112 roubles	Wage, 5 fr. per hour	Single, 360 fr. a month	With wife and one child, 570 fr.
Overcoat,					
50 per cent. wool	160-460	320-920	30-90	75-225	50-150
Suit . . .	115-460	230-920	30-80	75-200	50-130
Shoes . . .	70-140	140-280	9-18	23-45	15-30
Cap . . .	10-20	20-40	2-5	5-13	3-8
Lady's coat . .	140-500	280-1,000	25-80	63-200	42-130
Lady's shoes . .	90-160	180-230	10-20	26-52	16-32
Single iron bedstead . .	215-300	430-600	20-28	52-70	32-47
Deal wardrobe	160	320	43	108	72
	(Three valves)		(Six valves)		
Wireless set . .	650-700	1,300-1,400	140-300	350-750	233-500
Bicycle . . .	200-300	400-600	75	188	125
Tablet of soap .	1-2	2-4	15 min.	37 min.	25 min.

This last conclusion will no doubt greatly astonish our readers, and we therefore invite all lovers of mathematics to make the necessary calculations for themselves and to check and re-check the sources from which the figures come. Frankly, we were ourselves surprised at the result, but the agreement of statistical results, the evidence of reliable sources, the material published in the Soviet Press, and in particular fragmentary Soviet "self-criticism," leave not a shadow of doubt that misery reigns supreme amongst the workers of the Soviet Union.

Similar results would be obtained if we compared the material situation of the Russian workers with that of unemployed workers in Great Britain, Belgium or the United States in receipt of unemployment relief in the same period.

One of the great trumps of Soviet propaganda is that there is no unemployment in the Soviet Union—but the immense majority of working people in the Soviet Union are much worse off than unemployed workers in the capitalist countries of Western Europe and America.

Our general results are confirmed in a study made by Salomon Schwartz, who calculated the price in various countries of 1 kilogram of four different staple foodstuffs, reckoned in working minutes in 1937. The following are his results:

WORKING TIME NECESSARY FOR THE PURCHASE OF 1 KILOGRAM OF
THE LISTED FOODSTUFFS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES (IN MINUTES)

Country	Wheaten flour	Meat	Butter	Sugar	All four together
Soviet Union	106	277	600	206	1,189
Latvia	73	104	324	88	589
Poland	47	133	274	95	549
Esthonia	49	94	272	84	499
France	26	132	191	29	378
Sweden	22	94	158	21	309
Great Britain	21	103	160	25	295
United States	10	59	85	11	165

Let us see the same results turned into a graph:

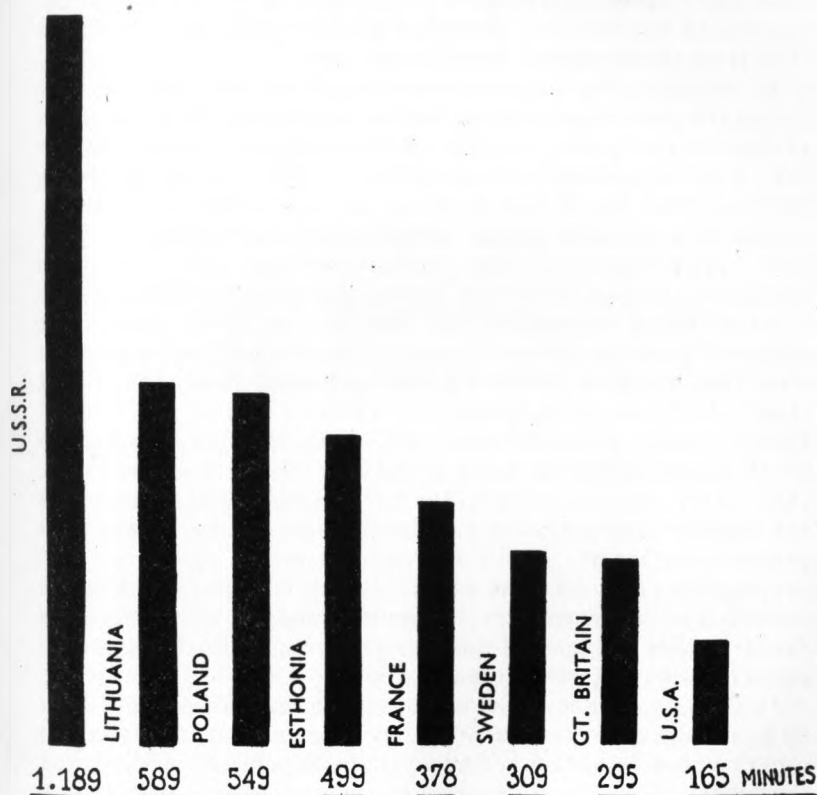


FIG. 8. Working time necessary to purchase 1 kgm. each of all four items listed.

These figures and the accompanying graph show us that even the next-door neighbours of the Soviet Union, Poland, Esthonia and Latvia, which, together with the Balkan countries, occupy the lower places in the scale of living standards in Europe, are twice as well off measured in staple foodstuffs as the workers of the Soviet Union. In the countries of Western Europe the workers are from three to four times better off than their colleagues in the Soviet Union, and in the United States they are even seven times better off. This is the result of strictly Marxist calculations, let us repeat—calculations based on the working time necessary to purchase the same quantity of the same goods.

Incidentally, the Soviet Government has, without knowing it, given us striking proof of the pitifully low level of existence of the masses in the Soviet Union by admitting the flabbergasted astonishment of Soviet troops when they first came into touch with life in Western Europe—and under very unfavourable circumstances at that. The phenomenon took on such menacing proportions for the masters of the Soviet Union that Kalinin dealt with it in an important speech delivered in August, 1945.

In substance, he was compelled to admit that wherever the Soviet troops went, even in Lithuania and Poland after four years of German occupation, standards of life were incomparably higher than those they were accustomed to in the Fatherland of the Toilers. They found that ordinary peasants had a, for them, incredible battery of kitchen utensils, and white sheets on their beds. They discovered that ordinary workers did not live in dormitories outside the Soviet Union, but that each had his own separate living accommodation. And so on. And when these soldiers returned to their own country they were full of tales about what they had seen, and they talked with admiration of the living standards of workers and peasants in other countries and uttered harsh criticisms of life in their own. When the time approached for their demobilization many of Russia's soldiers deserted rather than return to their hovels in the Soviet Union. The truth about the outside world spread so rapidly and assumed such dangerous proportions that the Soviet Government sent a special levy of propagandists out into the countryside to convince the Russian workers and peasants that European standards of living were "contemptibly bourgeois" and that no "individualist culture" could be of any benefit to them.

Thus, so long as the Soviet workers and peasants were kept from all knowledge of the outside world Soviet propaganda assured them that they lived in opulence. And when the stupefied astonishment of the Soviet workers and peasants in uniform in face of the very modest well-being they encountered in Eastern Europe outside the frontiers of the Soviet Union made them realize their own

extreme poverty, the Stalinist authorities began to sing the praises of iron-clad asceticism. Not without difficulty, however. For after having denounced bourgeois comforts because, whilst satisfying the body they allegedly destroyed the soul, Kalinin was compelled to promise his flock that one day they too should enjoy such comforts.

Let us waste no time in dwelling upon such lack of logic; it merely proves the weakness of the cause Kalinin defends. Sufficient to say that the shock of the allegedly sovereign Soviet proletariat, at discovering the humble well-being of the masses of workers and peasants in backward Central and Eastern Europe was shattering. This fact, perhaps one of the most eloquent which has ever been revealed to non-Soviet public opinion concerning conditions in the Soviet Union, harshly illuminates the comparison between the living standards of the people of Soviet Russia and the living standards of all peoples, even the worst off, outside the Fatherland of the Toilers.

And, finally, let us quote the confirmation of our own conclusions reached by two American investigators, Guy Irving Burch and Elmer Pendell in their book, *Population Roads to Peace or War* (Washington, 1946), and in the well-known economist Colin Clark's book, *The Conditions of Economic Progress*. Burch and Pendell conclude "to their great astonishment" that in a list of thirty-two countries, including India, China and Japan, the Soviet Union occupies twenty-eighth place with respect to general living standards, and even thirty-first place in general food standards.

The Effects of War

As we pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, we deliberately based our study on the peaceful and comparatively normal years from 1937 to 1940, in order to present conditions in the Soviet Union in the best possible light. But there are some who would like to believe that by heaven knows what miracle the war improved the situation of the workers in the Soviet Union.

Common sense ought to be sufficient to indicate that if war brought misery and want to even the most prosperous countries of Europe, it could not possibly have brought prosperity, or even an amelioration of the situation, in a country which already suffered misery and want. How can one possibly think that a country which produced so very little for the consumption of the masses even in peacetime, could suddenly begin to produce more bread, more footwear and more housing for its citizens in wartime when compelled to concentrate all its forces on the increasing production of armaments? One cannot reasonably think anything of the sort, and in 1946 the Soviet Union was, in fact, suffering the full blast of mass economic distress verging on famine. It would be unjust to

reproach the Soviet Government with that fact, and it would be stupid to deny that it is a fact.

For the benefit of those, therefore, who would set their devotion above the hard facts, let us now examine the living standards of the Russian people after the war.

First of all, as one would expect, prices have risen very considerably. The following comparison shows us the difference in price levels for various consumption goods:

<i>Articles</i>	<i>1937 Prices (in roubles)</i>	<i>1947 Prices (in roubles)¹</i>
Overcoats	200-500	3,000-5,000
Footwear	150-300	1,500-3,000
Shirts	22-40	600
Hats	35-75	300-500
Dresses	50-300	3,000
Cigarettes (25)	2-3	7·5-45

Let us recall that the average wage, which was 240 roubles in 1937, increased to 520 roubles in 1947 (*Les Cahiers de l'Economie soviétique*, Paris, October, 1946, p. 21, gives 410 roubles as the monthly wages of an ordinary Soviet worker before September 16th, 1946, when the rise, which we shall discuss later, took place). Thus wages doubled in ten years, but "free" prices increased tenfold in the same period. In the rationed shops prices increased only threefold; cigarettes, for example, cost from 4 to 15 roubles a packet (*Etudes et Conjonctures*, February, 1947). However, those shops which sell rationed goods are for the most part empty and unable to supply even the most ordinary articles of consumption; for instance, household goods are practically unobtainable. "Rich" Soviet citizens therefore have to fall back on the so-called *Tsum* or commercial, shops, whilst "poor" Soviet citizens—that is to say, the immense majority—just have to go without. With a monthly wage of 530 roubles, a Soviet worker must work from one to two months before he can buy a pair of shoes in a rationed shop, and from three to six months before he can buy them in one of the *Tsum* shops, which are, in fact, about the only places where he could get them. A French worker earning 10,500 francs a month would have to work four days to buy a pair of shoes on the ration and fifteen days to buy them on the free market.

To follow the development of food standards in the Soviet Union is very much more difficult. For one thing, there are various price levels for the same products: one for the rationed market, another for the free *kolkhoze* market, and a third for the free "commercial" market or *Tsum* shops; and the ratio of difference is sometimes as

¹ André Pierre in *Le Monde*, April 29th, 1947. Prices in the *Tsum*, or commercial, shops (free State market).

great as 1 : 15. And for another thing, on September 16th, 1946, the Soviet Council issued a decree raising the prices of rationed goods by between 150 per cent. and 350 per cent., and lowering the prices on the two free markets by between 27 per cent. and 53 per cent. At the same time, because the blow was a very hard one for those who obtained most of their food on the rationed market, the decree provided for cost-of-living bonuses of 110 roubles a month for wages below 300 roubles a month, of 100 roubles for wages between 300 and 500 roubles a month, and of from 80 to 90 roubles for wages between 500 and 900 roubles a month. Thus in 1946 wages increased by between 10 per cent. and 36 per cent., whilst the price of rationed goods increased by between 150 per cent. and 350 per cent. The increase was far from compensated for by the decrease of prices on the free markets (between 27 per cent. and 53 per cent. only), particularly as these markets are used, as the Soviet Press freely admits, only by citizens with "surplus income," which certainly does not include the great mass of the workers. The year 1947 thus opened with a great decrease in the living standards of the economically weak, and even of those earning middle-class salaries, and a slight improvement in the standards of the bureaucrats. It is clear that "levelling" is becoming a more and more bourgeois vice.

The following table illustrates the movements of wages and foodstuff prices in the decade 1937-47:

WAGES AND FOOD PRICES IN THE DECADE 1937-47 (IN ROUBLES)

	1937	1940	1945		End of 1946 and beginning of 1947			
	Uniform prices	Uniform prices	Ration Prices	Free Prices	Ration Prices		Free Prices	
					Before Decree	After Decree	Before Decree	After Decree
Rye bread .	0.85	1	1.10	—	1.10	3.40	10	8
Wheaten bread	1	1.70	3.80	175	3.80	11	50	45
Butter .	17	28	27	520	28	70	400	230
Meat .	7.90	16	16	235	14	36	150	130
Sugar .	4.50	5.50	5.50	425	5.60	14	220	75
Oil (litre) .	14.50	—	—	—	12	35	160	100
Eggs (10) .	7	6.50	6.50	100	6.50	8.50	100	45
Wages	240	350	410	430	530	—	—	—

The figures are taken from *Etudes et Conjonctures* of February, 1947, p. 38, *Les Cahiers de l'Economie soviétique*, 1946, and the decree of September 16th, 1946, as published in the Soviet Press.

From this table we can see that although average wages in the Soviet Union approximately doubled between 1937 and 1947, prices for rationed foodstuffs more or less quadrupled, whilst prices for the same foodstuffs on the free markets increased between ten and fifteen times, even forty-five times for white bread.

Living standards of the great mass of wage workers in the Soviet Union, particularly those who obtain all their supplies as rationed

goods, have thus decreased by 50 per cent. by comparison with 1937. Obviously, the smallest purchase on the free market would make a big hole in a working-class budget. As it has been estimated (André Pierre in *Le Mond* of April 27th, 1947) that rationed food-stuffs provide a maximum of nine-tenths of the vital minimum, we can only conclude that the poorest workers must obtain the remaining one-tenth from the free market at free-market prices. Thus their standard of life must have fallen in reality by 60 per cent. as compared with 1937.

Unfortunately, that, too, was to be expected. After the war the situation in the Soviet Union deteriorated as much as, if not more than, in the worst period of the Five-Year Plans. An unmistakable sign of the return of mass misery is that the system of registration and rationing introduced in 1930, abandoned in 1935, and re-introduced at the beginning of the war, was more rigorous and widespread in 1947 than ever before, to be abolished only in 1948.

It has often been contended that, thanks to the existence of factory canteens, whose number was greatly increased during the war years, the food standards of the Soviet worker are in reality better than would appear from a study of wages and prices. That is true, but it does not affect the comparison between the situation in the Soviet Union and the situation in other countries because there are similar canteens for workers in most capitalist factories, and from all we know it is not difficult to imagine that both quantity and quality are better in them than in Soviet factory canteens. Soviet workers pay for their canteen meals, and in 1947 prices varied between 2 and 10 roubles. Now although that was very advantageous for the Soviet worker it was not more so than was the case for workers in capitalist countries like Great Britain and France. As an example, for 30 francs the canteens of the Paris Philips Radio Co., a concern employing about 3,500 workers, offered a main meal consisting of soup, fish or meat, salad, or fruit or sweets, and a glass of beer. With a quarter of a litre of wine instead of the beer, the price was 35 francs. As at that time (1947) a French worker earned on an average 10,500 francs a month, his wage would buy 350 such meals. If we put the cost of a meal in Soviet factory canteens at the very lowest rate—say, 2.50 roubles—we discover that the monthly wage of the Soviet worker would buy only 200 such meals, consisting in his case invariably of *kacha*, cabbage soup, black bread and tea without sugar.

The American journalist William White has made a comparative study of the living standards of Russian and American workers in the last years of the war, 1944-5. He takes into account the meals obtained by the Russian worker in his canteen, and the respective proportions of food purchased on the ration and in the free market. He comes to the conclusion that the Soviet war worker working a

sixty-six hour week had a standard of life inferior to that of the American unemployed workman in receipt of federal unemployment support.

Quality does not seem to be improving much if we are to believe the following paragraph in the *Izvestia* of May 23rd, 1946:

"The Co-operative Kojevnik of the Co-operative Union of the Frunze District has put small suitcases on sale at from 65 to 85 roubles. Their quality is such that a few drops of rain are sufficient to cause them to disintegrate."

Referring to the housing crisis, André Pierre declares that "nowhere has it taken on such terrible dimensions as in Moscow," and he adds that six persons frequently occupy one room, very often a basement room. He cites the case of a Russian intellectual living in an entrance hall, through which all the other tenants of the house had to pass to get in and out. Everything is poverty-stricken, dirty and disordered. "It would be difficult to find anything similar even in the very poorest quarters of Paris" (André Pierre in *Le Monde*, April 29th, 1947).

When Molotov presented the new Five-Year Plan at the beginning of 1946 he revealed the fact that 25,000,000 people live in ruins or in holes in the ground. And in addition to these 25,000,000 of willy-nilly troglodytes there are great masses of people who were evacuated to the Urals and to Siberia, and who have since lived in barracks (*Res Publica*, Paris, London and New York, May, 1946).

Two years after the end of the war only one-third of the flooded pits had been pumped dry, one-sixth of the damaged machinery repaired, and one-third of the electric transport put in order. The following is an extract from a letter from Moscow giving illuminating details concerning the disastrous condition of Soviet economy in general in the year 1946:

"The occupation brought about the collapse of the whole structure of agriculture in the west. Out of a total of 137,000 tractors and 49,000 reapers and binders, only about 6,000 tractors were saved in 1941-2, and transported to the east. In consequence, the agricultural setback has been very serious. The collective agricultural system in the Ukraine alone used 90,000 tractors before the war, whilst all the liberated regions together have since received only 26,000 tractors from various parts of the country. . . . Cattle losses have been on the same scale. During the war cattle stocks in the occupied areas were reduced almost to nothing. Before the war these regions had 25 million head of cattle. The western areas will be faced with an almost total lack of meat, animal fats and manures for many years to come. . . . The soil has been impoverished. At an optimistic estimate the yield of wheat in the Ukraine this year will hardly be 50 per cent. of normal.

In addition, the area of land sown in 1945 was only 75 per cent. of normal. . . .

"Tractors for collective agriculture and horses for individual farming are both essential. Where both are absent, agriculture ceases altogether. In this situation it is every man for himself and very little for the collective régime. The Government is fighting against this attitude of the peasants, who are striving to revive individual property, and are seizing the land belonging to the collective farms" (a letter from Moscow published in *Res Publica* in May, 1946).

An important decree issued on December 13th, 1947, did very little to improve the living standards of the masses, but it did considerably improve the standards of the bureaucracy. Whilst the average wage remained more or less the same (500 roubles in December, 1947, as compared with 520 in October, 1946) the uniform prices established after the fusion of the three previously existing markets were fixed on an average at the level of those previously prevailing on the rationed market on which the poorer classes bought the major portion of their needs, and very considerably below the level of those previously prevailing on the former free markets on which the privileged groups were largely accustomed to make up their requirements.

Here are some of the new prices as announced by the Moscow broadcasting station (we have struck an average between the three scales):

	Uniform prices, 1948 (Moscow wireless)	Rationed prices, 1947 (see Table on p. 211)	Free-market prices, 1947
Rye bread . . .	3.20	3.40	8
Wheaten bread . .	8	11	45
Butter . . .	64	70	230
Meat . . .	40	36	130
Sugar . . .	15	14	75
Oil . . .	38	35	100
Eggs (10) . . .	10	8.50	45

All these observations are confirmed by the official figures of the Fourth Five-Year Plan (cf. *Les Cahiers de l'économie soviétique*, Paris, June, 1946). Before summing up their significance, let us point out that Soviet statistics still "run on Socialist rails." Three sets of figures are available for the production of each year. The first is the target announced a year or two before with a great flourish of trumpets; the second is the figure alleged to represent the actual result the year just ended; and the third is the figure actually entered into the records a year or two later. Invariably, the first

is greater than the second and the second is greater than the third. It is surely unnecessary to add that they are never presented simultaneously to the Soviet public. Thus the figures for 1938 production, which we will give later according to declarations made by Stalin at a congress at the time, were already below the target for the previously published Third Five-Year Plan, but when the fourth plan refers to the production of this same year we discover figures still lower. Incidentally, it is always difficult to tell whether such discordant accesses of modesty are intended to facilitate a discreet retrospective return to reality, or whether they are deliberately calculated to exaggerate future promised triumphs.

In order to guard ourselves on all sides, let us take figures midway between those we shall quote on the authority of Stalin for 1938 and those from the same authoritative source in 1946. Our circumspection provides the following figures:

	Total			Per capita		
	1938	1945	Estimated, 1950	1938	1945	Estimated, 1950
Wheat (millions of cwt.)	700	700	1300	cwts	4.1	6.4
Cattle (million head)	56	53	74	per animal	0.33	0.35
Sheep and goats (million head)	85	78	136	" "	0.50	0.64
Pigs (million head)	28	12	36	" "	0.17	0.17
Horses (million head)	16.5	11.4	16.7	" "	0.097	0.078
Cotton goods (millions of metres)	3100	—	4700	metres	18.2	22
Woollen goods (millions of metres)	100	—	159	"	0.59	0.75
Boots and shoes (millions of pairs)	135	—	240	pairs	0.80	1.13
Sugar (million tons)	2.5	—	2.4	kilos	1.45	1.18
Population (millions) ¹	178	197	210	—	—	—
	170	—	—	—	—	—

One can see that in general the situation was definitely worse in 1945 than it was in 1938, and that the plan, although optimistic as usual, promises only very minor improvements for 1950. It looks, in fact, as though the unfortunate Russians will have, after ten years, to go through the Golgotha of the First Five-Year Plan all over again.

Once again justice requires that these grave difficulties should be regarded as after-effects of the war—that is to say, that they should be put down to circumstances rather than to the Soviet régime as such. Incidentally, Communist and Soviet propaganda never pays us back in the same coin. It is never prepared to

¹ The population of the Soviet Union for 1938 was given as 178,000,000 in 1938 and as 170,000,000 in 1946.

recognize objective reasons stronger than the human will—at least, not in the West. The same phenomena which are used to support its accusations against the Western Powers are cited as explanations and excuses for the Soviet Union. Everything unfortunate that happens in capitalist countries, even when it is clearly the result of circumstances beyond governmental control, is nevertheless the fault of capitalism. In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, shortages are always first calumnies and then the result of bad weather.

How do Soviet Workers manage to Live?

1. As we have already seen, the proportion of wages spent on foodstuffs grows with the degree of impoverishment. Here are figures of the International Labour Office in May, 1939, on this point for a number of countries: New Zealand, 30 per cent.; The United States, Denmark and Switzerland, between 35 per cent. and 40 per cent.; Holland and Sweden, between 40 per cent. and 45 per cent.; Finland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and France, between 50 per cent. and 55 per cent.; Esthonia and Poland, between 55 per cent. and 60 per cent.; and the Soviet Union, between 65 per cent. and 80 per cent.

The worse the material situation of the Soviet worker becomes the greater is the part of his wages spent on food. Whilst it was about 45 per cent. in 1928 it had risen to between 65 per cent. and 80 per cent. during the period of the Five-Year Plans. In times of extreme shortage expenditure other than on foodstuffs, direct taxes and rent has been nil.

2. Further, as his wage declined, the Soviet worker spent proportionately less and less on more expensive items of foodstuffs, such as eggs, milk, meat, early vegetables, butter and wheaten products, and more on cheaper kinds of foodstuffs. Whilst Communist propaganda in all countries was glorifying the machine of which the Soviet worker had become the slave and not the beneficiary, whilst the Soviet authorities covered the walls of their underground railway stations with the finest marbles, whilst they built the longest canals, the biggest hydraulic dams, and so on, the real builders of these marvels were gradually being reduced to the lowest level of existence on rye bread, cabbage, *kacha*, potatoes and fish-head soup, washed down with infusions of vegetable leaves dignified with the honoured name of tea.

3. And even to exist at this low level the Russian worker had to employ every possible stratagem. During the rationing years everyone dabbled in the Black Market, despite the fact that a convicted offender was liable to the death sentence.

In Great Britain the Black Market has never got really out of hand, and the role it plays is comparatively unimportant, but in

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other European countries—in France, for instance—the population knows its underground ramifications only too well, and its operators defy all threats and all punishments. To risk death for such things before the war would have been unbelievable; to-day it has become a natural phenomenon.

In the Soviet Union Black Market dabbling for the worker consists in obtaining bread or potatoes, or some such commodity, at his co-operative at a comparatively low price by means of his food card and then selling it for ten, twenty or thirty times the price on the free market to citizens without food cards. Amongst the latter are former bourgeois, foreigners with *valuta*, workers dismissed from the factories for one reason or the other, the families of "Enemies of the People" and dispossessed *kulaks*, most of them disposing of old valuables, jewellery, clothes, furniture and generally articles left to them from happier days. Such treasure trove, unobtainable now in the Soviet Union, is eagerly bought up at very high prices by the parvenus of the day, the bureaucrats, the engineers, the higher officials of the party and the Secret Police, and so on.

It must not be thought that this Black Market is a thing of the past in the Soviet Union, and in February, 1947, André Pierre reported that the wives of workmen were still selling their bread ration, or part of it, immediately after leaving the bakeries.

Thus in the country of planning *par excellence*, where, according to its propagandists, paid and unpaid, production and distribution dovetail harmoniously, the truth is that economic anarchy reigns in distribution. Loss of time, endless queues, "the law of supply and demand," speculation, and all the combinations the Communists reproach capitalism with so bitterly, flourish in the Soviet Union as they do anywhere in the depths of economic misery. It would take a book to describe all the stratagems, brutal and comic, all the audacious tricks, and all the humiliations men must suffer under the relentless pressure of the ever-present problem of how to eat one's fill every day of the week.

4. Many workers and others enhance their meagre income by working overtime—not at their normal places of work. Working women make clothes at home; typists take on work outside their working hours; workers even try to get into two seven-hour shifts; doctors work at two dispensaries; teachers take on extra classes; and so on. In practice, the thirty-five hour week was just another Soviet propaganda trick. Even in the factories there were constant official infractions of the seven-hour-day law. Evidence of this fact can be found in the official organ of the Central Council of Soviet Labour Unions, *Voprossy Profsoigenia*, No. 12, June, 1937, in *Uralski Rabotchi*, No. 55 of 1937, and in the *Pravda* of July 4th, 1937.

5. In order to alleviate in part the food shortage from which the

towns are suffering, the Soviet Government has introduced the spare-time allotment system. It also encourages workers to breed animals, and thus in the suburbs of big towns one can find respectable workers in possession of perhaps one or two cows for their own use and enjoyment, whilst at the same time peasants, abused as *kulaks*, are being deported and shot for the same "crime." When drawing up the "Collective Contracts" to be imposed on the workers in 1947, the Plenum of the party and the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union included the quantities of each kind of grain and vegetable to be sown on the land attached to their factories.

Thus we find an ironic situation developing in which the sovereign workers of the towns are reduced to turning themselves into farm labourers in order to live, whilst at the same time caravan after caravan sets off for the depths of Siberia with wretched peasants too devoted to their own little plots of land to let themselves be turned willingly into slave workers.

Socialist planning reigns in Moscow. . . .

Why Soviet Standards declined under the Plans

1. The national income of the Soviet Union increased considerably during the ten years of the Five-Year Plans. According to Soviet propaganda figures, the increase was no less than 400 per cent., but if we prefer to rely on real figures not intended for publicity and propaganda purposes, then the percentage increase was, according to Yourievsky, about 150 per cent. Even that is enormous. Rarely has such a figure been attained in any other country in so short a space of time.

This enormous increase was precisely one of the principal causes of the catastrophic fall in the standards of living of the masses of the working people in the Soviet Union. It could not have been brought about without the production of capital goods on a very considerable scale. In order to produce these capital goods, labour power in the Soviet Union had to be exploited to the utmost limit of human endurance whilst at the same time its share of the social product, in the shape of consumption goods, was kept down to the absolute minimum. Capital goods, machinery, raw materials and so on are produced, generally speaking, by heavy industry for an industrial market, whilst consumption goods, clothing, furniture and so on, are produced by the light, or manufacturing, industries for sale to the population.

In 1930 the Soviet Government was unable or unwilling to take up long-term loans on the international capital market, and it therefore set out to create heavy industries from its own internal resources. It had neither sufficient capital nor sufficient technical ability, but it was rich in one thing: labour power. Now, it is a historic fact that the period of so-called "primitive accumulation"

in Great Britain, for example, which was completed in the first half of the nineteenth century, was also accompanied by terrible misery for the masses and by a fall in standards of living. The Five-Year Plans in the Soviet Union are the Soviet parallel to this capitalist period of "primitive accumulation." It is carried out by the new régime for the benefit of the new bureaucratic class. Because Russia started off her period of primitive accumulation at a lower level than that of Great Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and because her rulers wanted to complete it in a much shorter period, there is nothing at all astonishing in the fact that the accompanying misery has been, and still is, even more atrocious than it was in the early days of British industrialism.

Further, we must not forget that, despite the very considerable increase in national income which we have noted, it still remains very small in the Soviet Union in comparison with western countries. In 1937 *per capita* per annum it was only 3,000 francs as compared with 6,000 francs in France up to the crisis of 1930 (according to Bernonville) or twice as much. In the United States it was approximately four times as much. And further, both in France and in the United States, the proportion of national income re-invested in the manufacturing industries producing consumption goods for the benefit of the masses of the people was very much greater than in the Soviet Union.

In addition, the terribly low quality of the manufactured goods produced in the Soviet Union means that they have a very short life, so that soon after a Soviet worker has bought an article it is worn out and useless, and he needs another one. But although the use-value of these products is greatly reduced by their poor quality, they help to swell the national income figures without proportionately increasing the well-being of the people.

For all these reasons the working masses in the Soviet Union have to do without all ordinary and even necessary manufactured goods. The period of the First Five-Year Plan deprived the working masses of almost all such goods. There was no cloth available, no clothing, no boots and shoes, no sugar, no tea, no petrol, no nails—and as for a razor blade or a household knife, fork or dish, to obtain such a thing was a constant puzzle for the unfortunate Soviet housewife. The situation was very little better during the period of the Second Five-Year Plan.

The *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of September 22nd, 1935, and the *Izvestia* of September 8th, 1935, both wrote that Soviet women about to become mothers were finding it impossible to obtain baby linen and napkins. And the *Pravda*, No. 14, May, 1936, published the following extract from a letter written by a dispensing chemist in Kharkov complaining about the abortion law:

"It is already difficult to find a feeding-bottle, an ordinary

plaster, a scaled vessel and all the other things necessary for young children. What is the situation going to be like if the number of babies increases? There are no babies' carriages, no babies' baths, no babies' cots, and so on. Ought not the law to include an article making it obligatory on industry to produce such things at prices within the reach of ordinary people?"

The innocent is referring to the law of 1936 which prohibited voluntary abortion.

Many shops in the Soviet Union closed down for days, even weeks, at a time because they had nothing to sell. The *Sovietskaya Torgovlia* of April 14th and 23rd, 1936, wrote:

"In Gorki workers go from shop to shop in bands trying to buy a simple cotton shirt or a pair of boots. . . . In Krasnodar the shops have not had shirts or pants for over a year. . . . An inspection of the shops in various towns has led to scandalous results: no bread, no flour, no salt, no sugar, no oil, whilst candles and lamp chimneys are almost completely unobtainable."

And the *Legkaya Industriya* of July 17th, 1936, wrote: "Bread is short in the shops and what little there is is almost inedible. Customers have to queue for hours at a time to get it."

An investigation embracing 260 shops in Voronezh revealed that sixty-nine of them had no sugar, thirty-six had no salt and twenty-six had no cigarettes (*Le Programme financier de l'U.R.S.S.*, 1937, p. 18). And the *Pravda* of January 17th, February 2nd, April 13th, and July 7th and 20th, 1938, informs us that a Soviet citizen can search Moscow in vain for a domestic bucket, a domestic iron, an ordinary padlock, a hand-basin or a poker, and that "it takes months to run an ordinary jug to earth." And only 460 Moscow motor-buses out of 915 were on the streets because it was impossible to obtain spare parts.

Even in 1939 the situation did not seem to be very much better. Certain articles would disappear in certain neighbourhoods or even throughout the entire country, and the Soviet newspapers—for instance, the *Pravda*, No. 240 of 1939—were still publishing the same old complaints about the shortage of matches, soap, washing materials, sugar, and so on. And even bread was short in certain areas. A correspondent of the *Trud* writes (January 8th, 1939):

"For some time now the windows and shelves of the bakers in Karabach have been empty. The kinds of bread most in demand are absolutely unobtainable. A few days ago I made the round of all the bakers in the town and nowhere could I find any wheaten bread for sale."

We repeat that it was only just before the German invasion that the consumption of the masses in the Soviet Union had reached—certainly not Western standards, but at least normal standards for an Asiatic country.

A speech made by Stalin on February 8th, 1946, gives us a new proof of the enormous predominance given to heavy industry in the Soviet Union as against the manufacturing industries. Stalin quotes four of the products of heavy industry: pig iron, steel, coal and petrol. Compared with 1913, production in 1940 showed glorious increases ranging from three- to five-fold. But when he passed to an article of ordinary every-day consumption like grain he had to come down to earth and tell us that as against 21 million tons in 1913 it was 38 million tons in 1940, or "17 millions more"—and he naturally omitted to mention that in the same period the population of the Soviet Union had grown considerably, from 140 millions to 190 millions: 50 million more stomachs to feed. This figure of 190 millions, like the production figures quoted earlier on, takes into account the annexations of 1939 which re-established Russia in her old frontiers of 1913.

The primary cause of the very low level of life of the Russian people lies in the fact that the national income of the Soviet Union per head of the population is still very small. And one of the chief reasons for the fall in Soviet living standards lies in the gross disproportion between the production of heavy industry and the production of the manufacturing industries. The former is encouraged to the utmost; the latter is deliberately neglected.

As we can see, both the principles and the methods of primitive accumulation in the Soviet Union are not much different from those of capitalism at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The aim of this primitive accumulation is to exploit labour power to the utmost to secure the production of the greatest possible amount of riches whilst returning to labour the smallest possible quantity of goods vital to the maintenance of life and the perpetuation of the species.

2. The second reason for the fall in Soviet living standards was the forced collectivization of agriculture. Considerations of space forbid us to go into details as to why the peasants oppose collectivization. Suffice it to say that sooner than deliver up their livestock to the collectives, or *kolkhozes*, the peasants slaughtered their animals wholesale. The result was an acute shortage of meat, butter, dairy products of all kinds, leather, wool, and all other animal products. This mass slaughter of horses and cattle was not compensated for by increasing supplies of tractors, most of which were in any case paper figures for the purposes of propaganda. The result was a great drop in harvest yields. At the time the Soviet Press published many illuminating items: "Oxen were the principal means of traction at sowing times" (*Molot*, May 21st, 1933). "A pair of horses was sometimes replaced by a team of twenty-two men" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, May 30th, 1933). "Traces had to be replaced by cord as no leather was available."

Writing in the *Izvestia* on January 28th, 1938, Stalin declared:

"There is a shortage of milk and of meat owing to the destruction of half our livestock." He did not mention the fact that this destruction of livestock was the direct result of his own barbarous policy of forced collectivization.

An accompanying phenomenon of agricultural collectivization less known to public opinion in other countries, was the death of 8 million people, partly due to the terrible famine which ensued and partly to the wholesale executions and deportations carried out by the Communist Party and the Secret Police.

Stalin proved himself incapable of foreseeing a fact of fundamental importance for his own economic system. The peasant artisan, a type highly developed in old Russia and in Russia of the N.E.P., was destroyed before the Soviet manufacturing industries were able to satisfy even the most elementary needs of the masses. In consequence, the peasants had to go without footwear, without agricultural implements, without pottery and domestic goods, and without the hundred and one simple products which went to make up their well-being. Similarly, the towns had to go without milk and meat, without fresh vegetables, without butter and without sugar, because, not unnaturally, the peasants were unwilling to produce and part with commodities for which the town was unable to give them anything in exchange. And thus setting out on his journey towards "the ideal of the socialization of peasant production," Stalin ended by precipitating all his people, both urban and rural, into a common planned ruin.

3. Another determining factor of the low level of Soviet living standards is the inefficiency of agricultural production. People often assume that Russia, with her immense spaces, is an endless reservoir of agricultural production. This is not the case. Compared with the size of her population, Russia tills only a limited area of her arable possibilities. In this respect, the situation is much more readily comparable with Asiatic countries than with new agricultural countries like the United States, Canada and the Argentine. According to figures given by Stalin at the Eighteenth Party Congress, only 137 million hectares¹ were under cultivation by a total peasant population of 130 millions. In France, for instance, 15 million peasants cultivate 40 million hectares of land—that is to say, 2.66 hectares *per capita* as against 1 hectare in the Soviet Union. In addition, the average yield per hectare is almost twice as great in France as in the Soviet Union. The production per hectare of wheat in France, for example, is an average of 15 cwt., reaching a maximum of between 40 and 50 cwt., whilst in the Soviet Union the average per hectare is 8 cwt., reaching a maximum of between 15 and 18 cwt. Taking into account the total populations of both countries (in 1938 the population of France was 42 millions and

¹ A hectare is 2.47 acres.—Tr.

the population of the Soviet Union 170 millions), it is clear that French soil feeds its inhabitants three times better than Soviet soil does.

Further, unlike the countries of Western Europe, the Soviet Union cannot rely on the relative constancy of its harvests. A great part of its agricultural area, and in particular the lands which grow wheat, suffers from a very dry climate, something like that of North Africa, and in consequence good harvest years are not sufficient to make up for bad years, and there are periodic famines.

Further, the population of France is more or less stable, whereas the population of the Soviet Union is constantly growing. There are 3 million more mouths to feed every year: a new population the size of Poland's every decade!

Unless the Soviet Union rapidly increases its arable area by clearing forest land, or unless it greatly increases the intensity of its culture, or both, it will find itself unable to feed its population in the future. Or it will have to keep down its birth-rate. Or perhaps the terror will continue, as it did during the period of the Five-Year Plans, to dispose of the excess population.

4. Another factor which affected living standards in the Soviet Union was the export of grain, fish, oil, timber, and petrol at very low prices during the world economic crises which prevailed at the time of the First Five-Year Plan. In absolute figures, these exports were not great, but in relation to the underconsumption of the population they played quite a considerable role. These exports were necessary in order to pay for the import of costly foreign machinery required for industrialization purposes. Once again the Soviet State sacrificed the well-being of the masses of the Russian people to the needs of its own process of primitive accumulation.

5. The influx of peasants into the towns as a result of the development of industry completely upset all normal requirements, and the famous plans neither took this into account nor proved able to remedy the disharmony when it became visible. Amongst other consequences there is the very great housing shortage, amounting to a real crisis, and the very great shortage of hospital accommodation; for instance, the number of hospital beds per given number of inhabitants has decreased by comparison with 1913, when it was already terribly low.

6. One-time peasants now skilled workers, one-time workers now qualified engineers, and politicians promoted managing directors of factories—all without industrial traditions behind them—have never succeeded in obtaining a satisfactory level of production, though in their efforts they have worked terrible havoc amongst the expensive machinery and machine-tools purchased abroad at the cost of privations at home.

Muddle has produced further muddle. Technical ignorance has produced costly and often absurd ideas. Coal-mines have been worked thousands of miles away from deposits of iron ore, thus making transport costs prohibitive. Directors have woken up too late to the fact that no railway communications linked the two centres. Tens of thousands of lorries have been mobilized, and then there is not sufficient petrol to run them. Convoys of loaded lorries have been parked by the wayside to await their burial in snow. The "biggest hydro-electric dam in the whole world" was built, but it was so far away from the main centres of industrial production that the greater part of its capacity has remained unutilized. And then during the war it had to be destroyed to prevent its falling intact into the hands of the Germans. "The longest canal in the whole world" was dug, and cost the lives of tens of thousands of convict labourers, but very little traffic sails along it. Valuable machines stand idle for months waiting for spare parts which are unobtainable. Tractors rust in the open fields waiting for the services of a mechanic, or perhaps simply because there is no petrol.

The bureaucracy have abolished all personal initiative, and their forms, orders and countermanding orders, often useless and even deleterious, controlling the least hand's turn, pile up and hamper progress at every stage of production. Administrative circulars have been addressed to the managements of collective farms, the famous *kolkhozes*, beginning: "By virtue of the doctrines of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. . . ." "In view of the degeneration of the bourgeois world . . ." "Considering the overwhelming success of Soviet production, which has passed and surpassed that of the United States of America . . . the People's Commissar of Agriculture has decided . . . that farm animals shall be mated . . . that the work of harvesting shall begin . . . on such and such a date . . ." "that the quantity of fodder to be stored for the winter . . ." (see Decree of February 11th, 1933). And so on for all the common tasks of the agricultural round accomplished for countless centuries by husbandmen without circulars.

It is by virtue of this vigilant and watchful planning of every hand's turn that, as William White pointed out after his inspection of Soviet factories, "a thousand days' labour are necessary to turn out a motor in the Soviet Union, whilst in the United States a motor of the same power and type is turned out in less than 200 days' labour." And he adds: "The factory is full to capacity with the best U.S. machinery and tools, but there seems a lack of efficient organization." Amongst a hundred others, White gives the following example:

"Women (some of them with sacks bound round their feet in place of shoes) were transporting a load of unfinished pieces in

a wheel-barrow, which upset at a broken place in the flooring, and the women then had to stop and load it up again. That floor could have been repaired at the price of one of the drills supplied under Lend-Lease, of which the factory was full, and production could have been increased by perhaps 25 per cent. An American business man, even the dullest, desirous of obtaining the best from his workers, would first of all make them comfortable, give them good lighting and a solid, even flooring."

7. Everyone knows the state of the Russian railways. Average speeds lie between ten and twenty miles an hour for goods trains, and between twenty and a little over thirty miles an hour for passenger trains. And in a single year, according to the statement of Kaganovitch at the Party Congress in 1934, there were 62,000 accidents. And, apart from one or two main arterials, the roads consist chiefly of muddy ruts and shifting sands.

On top of these difficulties come errors in lading: wrong goods sent to right destinations; right goods sent to wrong destinations, and so on. Whole trains loaded with perishable goods have been left indefinitely in forgotten railway sidings. Important raw materials and other goods, for which perhaps the factories of a whole district are eagerly waiting, are left lying in the yards uncovered and deteriorating in the rain and slush. A stern decree was issued in order to put a stop to such carelessness, and a rigid limit was imposed on the length of time merchandise might be left standing. Immediately loads of fragile goods were expeditiously emptied by the simple process of tipping up the wagons, with the result that enormous breakages occurred, necessitating the transport of replacements to make good the losses caused by such blind obedience to the dictates of the plan.

8. During 1937 the purge carried out amongst leaders of industry and engineers in the Soviet Union was almost as devastating in its effects as a full-scale social revolution. Not only were directors, engineers, heads of trusts and other managerial personnel imprisoned or shot by the thousand, but even the commissars attached to various branches of industry did not escape.

Writing in the *Pravda* of September 11th, 1937, Notgev, the head of the Combustibles Section in Moscow, declared: "The purge and the denunciations have created complete disorder in the production and distribution of combustible goods." He would have been wiser to keep his mouth shut, for he was then arrested himself.

Quite apart from denunciations for political reasons, the least error can bring down terrible punishment on the head of the unfortunate who committed it. The conception of managerial responsibility in the Soviet Union is about as false as it possibly could be. As the fulfilment of the plan Moloch is everything, and the

means whereby it is fulfilled nothing, and as non-fulfilment may easily mean disgrace and ruin, a Soviet director would not hesitate for one moment to disorganize future production in order to comply with present demands. What tricks, what deception, what futile efforts, what accidents and what losses lie behind "the fulfilment of the plan"! And even then the fulfilment is only on paper. What inhuman punishments, what sweated labour, what despair for thousands and thousands of human beings enmeshed in the "planned estimates," like so many flies inextricably caught on a fly-paper! At every stage of Soviet economy production standards of both workers and clerical employees are derisory compared with the efforts they make, thanks to the fact that they are working to the iron laws of the plan and under a permanent threat from the Secret Police, who have their agents in every factory on the watch for what they can discover.

9. Contrary to common belief the production of important foodstuffs and other materials, such as grain, timber, petrol and so on, is far from being satisfactory in relation to the needs of the population.

Herriot, having seen women lining up for hours in order to obtain a pint of oil for their stoves and lamps, asked himself in astonishment how such things were possible in view of the enormous production of petrol and other oils in the Soviet Union. But it is the same with all the products Russia once furnished in abundance. The Soviet Union produces timber on a large scale? On the contrary, the Soviet Union is desperately short of timber for every purpose, for fuel, for furniture, for all classes of goods, for housing and repairs, and, above all, for railway sleepers. The Soviet Union is a big producer of iron and steel? On the contrary, it lacks metal for every purpose, and nails are almost as rare as diamonds. The Soviet Union is a big producer of wheat? On the contrary, masses of men, women and children die of hunger in the Soviet Union.

Everything is concentrated on the needs of heavy industry? Up to a point that is true, but even heavy industry in the Soviet Union is desperately short of everything it needs: petrol, timber, steel, iron—even ordinary nails.

The truth is that much of the alleged enormous production going on in the Soviet Union is bluff. What does the world know of Soviet production figures? Only those the Gosplan authorities trumpet forth from time to time. The vast production figures, the many tons of pig-iron, the sacks of cement, and all the other products of the industrial giants, camouflage an extreme shortage of all kinds of commodities in an orgy of figures as indigestible to us as they are to the slaves working in them. Everyone has heard of the giant Dnieperstroï—Soviet propaganda has seen to that—but how many people know that during the period of the First

Five-Year Plan millions of men, women and children literally starved to death?

One explanation of the general misconception concerning Soviet production lies perhaps in the understandable objection of the Soviet propaganda kitchen to the publication of figures per head of the population. Even if the quantity of goods produced were really very large, the needs of 180,000,000 people are enormous, even if they do not enjoy standards of life such as we are accustomed to. Even without allowing for the usual exaggeration of Soviet statistics (as we shall see later on, the population figures after 1932 have been tampered with, and undoubtedly production figures as well), and basing ourselves on information given to the Eighteenth Party Congress on March 10th, 1939, by Stalin himself, and on official information made available by the Gosplan authorities, here are the total figures for consumption goods for 1913, 1928 and during the period of the Five-Year Plans:

PRODUCTION OF CONSUMPTION GOODS

	1913	1928	1932	1934	1936	1937	1938
Population (millions)	140	152	165	167	172	175	178
Wheat (million cwt.)	816	733	698	805	740	1,080	855
Cattle (million head)	60.6	70.5	40.7	42.4	56.5	57	63.2
Sheep and goats (million head)	121.2	146.7	52	51.9	73.7	81.3	102.5
Pigs (million head)	20.9	26	11.6	17.4	30.5	22.8	30.6
Horses (million head)	35.8	33.5	19.6	15.7	16.6	16.7	17.5
Cotton goods (million metres)	2,224	2,798	2,417	2,550	3,257	3,140	
Woollen cloth (million metres)	89	86.8	88	71.8	98.1	98	
Sugar (million tons)	1.29	1.28	0.82	1.35	2.1	2.4	
Boots and shoes (million pairs)		29.6		84.8	105	134	

Before assessing the value of these figures, it must be remembered that in the period of the Five-Year Plans in particular the percentage of losses between the point of production and the point of consumption was very great. We have, for instance, deducted only 10 per cent. of the wheat harvest on the haulm to obtain the total actually harvested (Ossinsky, in the *Izvestia*, January 9th, 1934). However, in 1937 the Soviet authorities announced that "35 per cent. of the biological harvest has been lost," which would reduce the effective yield per head of the population to 0.42 ton as against 0.6 ton in 1913. Stalin himself has referred in one of his speeches to "the enormous losses of grain at harvesting time, amounting to between 20 per cent. and 25 per cent. of the total yield."

In this connection, it is interesting for the reader to recall that the punishment for unauthorized gleaning in the Soviet Union was death.

Thus, the quantities of wheat, meat and animal products (dairy products, leather, wool) diminished considerably per head of the population during the First Five-Year Plan, and this confirms the fall in Soviet living standards which was revealed on the basis of wage and price movements. Only the consumption of potatoes increased, and, in fact, past experience shows that this phenomenon always accompanies a famine in Russia.

1913 INDEX = 1 ACCORDING TO FIGURES GIVEN BY STALIN
(PRAVDA, JANUARY 28th 1934)

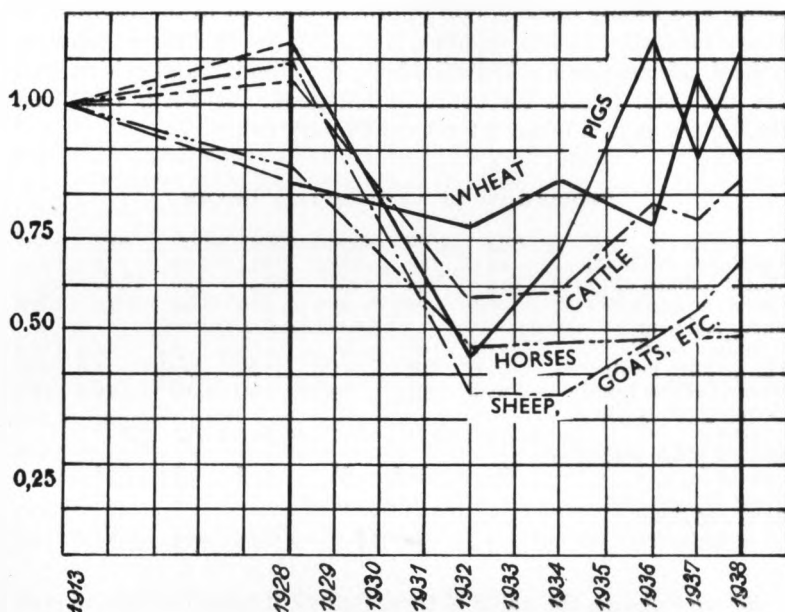


FIG. 9. *Per capita* development of agricultural production.

The amount of cotton goods and the number of boots and shoes seems also to have increased, but we have not taken what might be termed artisan production into account, which was particularly active in these two branches in 1913 and 1928.

Even for heavy industry Soviet production, although rapidly increasing, is still very low when measured per head of the population. France, for instance, is not particularly powerful industrially, but nevertheless she produces twice as much coal per head of the population as the Soviet Union, twice as much electrical energy, 1.6 times as much steel, 5.5 times as many motor cars, 6 times as much paper, twice as many pairs of boots and shoes, and 2.5 times as much sulphuric acid and castings. If Soviet production per

head of the population is similarly compared with Great Britain and the United States, then the comparison is still less favourable.

The agricultural production in the Soviet Union is also very low. On an average, the Soviet Union produces 8 cwt. of wheat per hectare, whilst in Czechoslovakia the average is 17.5 and in France 14.59. The *Tikhookeanskaya Zverda* of March 9th, 1937, reported that on certain collective farms the yield of wheat per hectare had fallen to 5.8 cwt. in 1934 and to 3.2 cwt. in 1937. Other sources (Otto Schiller in Berlin, 1933, and the *Socialisticheskoe Stroitel'stvo S.S.S.R.* in 1936) report that the annual yield per hectare of beet was 160 cwt. between 1909 and 1913, and only 90 cwt. between 1931 and 1935. The respective figures for flax were 4 cwt. and 2.3 cwt.

Low quality of production, the lack of efficient organization, the low level of technical capacity, bureaucratic paralysis and political chicanery are the curses of the Soviet productive system and the fundamental causes of the low standard of life of the Soviet masses.

To those people in more advanced countries who are astonished and perhaps a little incredulous at the primitive level of life in the Soviet Union we would point out that this is the level of life of the great majority of the people who inhabit this globe. 500 million Chinese and Japanese are no better off, nor are 350 million Indians, Persians and Arabs. Or 150 million Berbers, Ethiopians, Bantus, and Kaffirs. Or all the millions of Mulattos, Melanesians, Polynesians, the descendants of Negro slaves, and the primitive peoples of Oceania. In our more advanced civilizations we are inclined to forget that the human race as a whole is still in a very primitive stage of development, and that want is its primal law. Only a very small minority of the human race has as yet emerged into a higher material and spiritual civilization. Unemployed workmen in Great Britain, France, Belgium and the United States are privileged creatures compared with Negroes, Chinese coolies, Arab and Egyptian *fellaheen*, Indian pariahs and Russian *mujiks*. It is much more easy to assure abundance for the few than the bare necessities of life for the many.

How far away we have got from the Stalinist propaganda myth: "The standard of life of the Soviet people is unknown in Western Europe and America"! Alas, how true!

In poverty-stricken countries, much more than in prosperous or relatively prosperous countries, rulers bear a grave responsibility for all matters concerning the standard of life. The more precarious the material situation of the masses, the more a government—particularly when it claims to be Socialist—should guard against any deterioration. When living standards are barely above the vital minimum, then any fall, however slight, can easily lead to catastrophe for millions. Such has been the case in the Soviet

Union, where it is much more criminal to increase the tempo of accumulation without consideration to the material sufferings of the masses, to invest disproportionately in the production of capital goods to the detriment of consumption goods, and to force through economic experiments such as agricultural collectivization against the will and the interests of all concerned, than in a country prosperous enough to enjoy a margin of well-being sufficient to prevent any minor fall in living standards from developing into a major catastrophe.

When the very lives of the masses are at stake responsible rulers must make political concessions. Lenin never forgot that humanitarian axiom. Although he was a convinced Socialist, or, rather, just because he was, he was prepared to make compromises. Although to him Socialism was the source of future well-being, he was prepared to sacrifice socialization to capitalism where the latter offered a source of immediate well-being in a country where the masses were not yet ripe for the new experiment. The peasants had not been won over for agricultural collectivization nor the urban population for a planned Socialist economy, and Lenin therefore realized that what became known as the New Economic Policy was necessary to ensure the peasants the full enjoyment of the land and the urban population the greater facilities of a free market. In this crucial act, he sacrificed his future ideal to some extent to the immediate well-being of the masses of his people. Stalin, on the contrary, sacrifices the whole present generation to the dogmas of his party, or, rather, to the maintenance of his power.

The Soviet State and the Extraction of Surplus-Value

1. Indirect Taxation.

In 1937 the State Budget totalled 98,000,000 roubles, of which only 2.6 per cent. was derived from direct taxation. As we shall see, the Soviet fiscal system is one of the most unjust in the world. For instance, in France the State derives no less than 21 per cent. of its revenue from direct taxation—though this does not prevent *l'Humanité*, the official organ of the French Communist Party, from demanding “the increasing introduction of democratic principles into the fiscal system by giving first place to direct taxation and increasing it to 34 per cent. of all revenues” (February 5th, 1937). It is a matter for regret that its anxiety for democracy and equity never persuades it to devote any of its space to demanding that the Soviet Government should relieve the masses of its people of the heavy and unjust burden of indirect taxation which so depresses their standard of life.

In 1936 indirect taxation on retail trade in the Soviet Union

represented no less than 62.3 per cent. of the total value of the turn-over. In other words, when the average Russian citizen spent a hundred roubles of his wages, 62.3 roubles went into the coffers of the State in indirect taxation.

According to the official *Bulletin de la Législation financière et économique de l'U.R.S.S.*, No. 35 of 1935 and No. 1 of 1936, the proportion of indirect taxation in the total turnover of the retail meat trade in the Soviet Union is between 63 per cent. and 69 per cent. When the Russian citizen spends 1 rouble on meat, 35 kopecks cover the cost price, storage charge, sales overheads and transport costs, whilst the remaining 65 kopecks represent the share appropriated by the Socialist State. The following is a list of various consumption goods showing how much in every rouble expended on their purchase goes to the State (*Bulletin économique*, March, 1935, p. 24):

	<i>Kopecks</i>
Sugar	85.7
Preserves	72.81
Margarine	40.60
Cheese	75.86
Herrings	56.66
Salt	83
Soap	62.3
Cotton Handkerchiefs	74.2
Petrol	93

Indirect taxation on sugar and petrol was twice as great as in 1913. It must not be forgotten that in the Soviet Union, particularly in the rural areas, masses of people still use oil for lighting and cooking (the Primus or some such pressure stove is one of the main features of the Soviet kitchen).

The peasants no more escape this indirect exploitation on the part of the State than the urban workers do. The following comparative table shows how much the peasants could buy in return for 1 cwt. of rye in 1913 and in 1932:

	1913	1932
Cotton goods	25.03 metres	3.3 metres
Sugar	15.4 kilos	2.53 kilos
Household soap	17.03 kilos	1.41 kilos

The Soviet State exploits its workers and peasants far more ruthlessly than private capitalists do theirs. It buys foodstuffs and raw materials at very low prices from the peasants, it pays the very minimum wages to its workers, and it re-sells its foodstuffs and manufactured goods to both workers and peasants at extremely

high prices. The rate of exploitation and the degree of surplus-value extraction was never so high in capitalist countries as it is in the alleged stronghold of Marxian Socialism. To borrow an appropriate slogan much favoured in French Communist Party propaganda: "It is the poor who always pay."

2. *Direct Methods.*

From time to time the Soviet State expropriates quantities of privately owned goods, etc., to its own enjoyment by various direct methods.

By Total Expropriation. At the time of the enforced collectivization many so-called *kulaks* were dispossessed of all their property, which did not go to the *kolkhozes*, but direct to the State. Similarly, at the time of the suppression of the N.E.P. the possessions of independent artisans, business men and small industrialists were seized by the State.

Sequestrations by Secret Police Courts. Hundreds of thousands of bourgeois, intellectuals, oppositionals of the Right, Left and Centre, workers and peasants had all their worldly goods confiscated when they were imprisoned, deported or condemned to death.

Appropriation by Extra-taxation and the Collection of Privately-owned Precious Metals. State loans, to which all must subscribe, are one form of what we have termed extra-taxation. Towards the end of the First Five-Year Plan period such and similar exceptional measures, particularly the compulsory surrender of gold, often took on a tragic aspect for the individual. This in itself is, of course, not exclusively a Soviet phenomenon. For instance, the "devaluation" carried out in capitalist countries is a milder form of the same sort of thing. Wedding rings of gold were collected in Fascist Italy for the benefit of the State, whilst, of course, there was the odious expropriation of Jewish property by the Nazis in Germany, this latter being a faithful copy of normal Stalinist procedure.

All our figures and all the conclusions we have drawn from them are valid, be it understood, only for the broad masses of the Russian people, and not for the privileged classes, who, as we have seen, have incomes from four to fifty times greater than that of an average skilled worker, and from eight to a hundred times greater than that of an unskilled labourer. It is quite clear that the more favoured groups of bureaucrats have no food and clothing problems—indeed, no economic problems of any sort. A highly-skilled engineer, a highly-placed bureaucrat, and a popular artist or writer earning between 4,000 and 10,000 roubles a month in 1937 enjoyed a standard of living equivalent to that of, say, a French bourgeois whose income was between 4,000 and 10,000 francs a month in the same period. And both of them, the French bourgeois and the Soviet bureaucrat, were very nicely off indeed.

Very many people outside the Soviet Union maintain, even against the weight of mathematical demonstration, that a degree of misery such as we have described could not possibly exist in reality, and they base their scepticism on the evidence of Soviet citizens travelling abroad, all of whom express nothing but satisfaction with their régime.

First of all, such people belong to the privileged groups to which we have referred, and it is very rarely that privileged persons complain of the régime which privileges them—unless it is to deplore its weakness towards those who threaten their privileges, i.e. strikers and rebellious elements in general for the capitalists, and *kulaks* or Trotskyites for the Soviet bureaucrats.

Further, both nationally and internationally, the bourgeois live amongst bourgeois, and the privileged live amongst privileged, and quite naturally both are inclined to confuse the situation as a whole with the situation in which they live so comfortably. For instance, if a bourgeois from, say Baghdad, visits a bourgeois in New York, then over coffee and brandy after an excellent meal it is extremely unlikely that the New Yorker will hear his Baghdad colleague deploring the wretched conditions of the *fellaheen* at home—and the workers and beggars of Baghdad never go to New York on visits. Their conversation is much more likely to turn around the market price of petrol, or, if the field of ideas is touched upon at all, on the magnificent efforts of the missionaries who, under a broiling sky . . .

Similarly, the Soviet Government has never sent miners from the Don Basin, or peasants from the Urals, or convicts from the White Sea penal settlements, or female labourers into the bourgeois world outside the Soviet Union—it has not even sent fake delegations of its faithful purporting to be such. The only Soviet citizens who are ever permitted to go outside the Soviet Union are prominent engineers, diplomats and high officials able to speak at least two foreign languages. And what a careful selection there is even of such people!

If one or the other of them is not completely armoured by egoism and protected by the blindness natural to all privileged groups, if his conscience is moved by the despairing misery of the great masses of the Russian people and he is tempted to speak, then the temptation is soon dismissed by the thought of his wife, his daughter, or his mother in the Fatherland of the Toilers, where the atrocious and merciless law of hostages is in full force.

THE GRAVEYARD OF SOCIALIST IDEALS

"The trouble, they tell me, is temporary. Accept the present situation. It is just one step in a flight. But that flight, the Soviet Union, does not lead upwards; it leads down." André Gide,
Retouche à mon Retour d'U.R.S.S.

STALIN HAS NEVER OMITTED to claim loudly that he is the representative of Bolshevism of the revolutionary era, and this verbal affiliation has done not a little to confuse public opinion. In fact, however, innumerable theories are at present in high honour under Stalin's régime which the November Revolution most expressly condemned and combated. Let us single out the most notable of these changes of policy and compare them with the official protestations of fidelity to the ideals of the Russian Revolution. We do not propose to take sides in the matter or support one doctrine as against the other; our task is merely to show the abyss which separates them.

Stalinist Idealization of Inequality

Marxists are accustomed to distinguish several "stages" in the conjectural development of institutions born of a proletarian revolution. Immediately after the seizure of power, during a "Socialist" phase, the State apparatus must continue to exist as an indispensable instrument to crush any attempts at counter-revolution on the part of the displaced ruling classes, just as owing to the backwardness of the masses or the inadequacy of the existing means of production certain capitalist economic forms must continue to exist for a while. However, in consequence of the collective appropriation of the means of production, distribution and exchange, all the remaining vestiges of the bourgeoisie and its work will "gradually disappear," and "the State" will "wither away," until finally "the government of men" will be completely replaced by "the administration of things," this latter constituting the "ultimate phase," or Communism.

With regard to the inequality of wages and salaries, Marxism recognizes that only a Communist régime in its final phase can give "to each according to his needs," whilst the initial Socialist régime is obliged to give "to each according to his labour." However, these differences were never intended to buttress up an official hierarchy (witness the proletarian wage laid down for the highest officials of the party and the State), but to recompense and reward

the willing efforts of the workers to increase production. And in any case, such differences were not to take on the proportions customary in bourgeois countries, which were unanimously judged to be scandalous by all Marxists. The masses were to be gradually educated to despise social inequalities and not to respect them, so that little by little they would accept their disappearance without in the least permitting it to affect the quantity and quality of their production, or the integrity of their social conscience.

The right of personal inheritance, which particularly made privilege odious in the eyes of all Socialists, was re-established in the Soviet Union as early as 1926. In the first days of the Five-Year Plan, in June, 1931, a decree was issued placing all workers in one or other of eight categories, whose wages differed progressively from 1 to 5.5, that is to say, the workers in the highest category received 5.5 times more wages than those in the lowest. To give this procedure a specious cloak of justification, Stalin revived the old theory of "the stages of Socialist development," and he loudly informed the world that at the moment he was building up "Socialism" and not "Communism." But in fact the blatant inequalities of income he introduced were not at all inspired by motives which might have excused them in the eyes of real Socialists, and privileges became more and more attached to title and position than to the result of labour. No special solicitude was shown to labour of a particularly arduous nature. And the privileges of the few extended enormously at a time when the many lacked even the simple necessities of life. Inequalities in the Soviet Union were no longer a tactic, but a system.

In 1935 the organ of the Gosplan published the following comment on the abolition of ration books and low prices in working men's co-operatives:

"The introduction of uniform prices will provide a basis for . . . the final liquidation of equalitarian reward for labour" (Basily, P. 345).

Stalin officially introduced the principle of inequality to the Marxist paradise at the Seventeenth Party Congress in that exaggerated and violent language which is characteristic of the domestic atmosphere of the Soviet Union:

"Equalitarianism with regard to needs and from the point of view of ordinary every day life is a reactionary petty-bourgeois absurdity. It is high time that everyone understood that Marxism is an enemy of equalitarianism" (Stalin, in his concluding speech to the Plenum in March, 1937).

With this we have progressed very far from the idea of granting an incentive to "the old bourgeois Adam" to persuade him to increase his productivity by whetting his appetite. Lenin had to make that concession, though he did so against his will. Since then

we have travelled far, and under Stalin equalitarianism, or social equality (*uravnilovka*), has become "intolerable, Trotskyite and contrary to human nature."

How often "human nature" is called into an argument to befog the issue! Stalin deliberately seeks to confuse a uniformity of tastes, which no one has ever desired or believed possible, with an equality of means for satisfying a diversity of tastes, which the disinherited of this world have always ardently desired. The leading theoreticians of Socialism have never disputed the disparity of human capacities and talents, and they have never demanded that this disparity should be abolished. What they have said is that when privilege is added to that disparity of capacity and talent a ferment of injustice and oppression is formed. Their idea was that in creating general abundance, in which all could share, they would conciliate this disparity and contribute towards a higher collective perfection of mankind. In their view, if well-being were assured to all, if access to all forms of education were open to all, if the material instruments for the elevation of the individual were held in common for the good of all, then men would be placed on an equal footing from the start, and their subsequent competition and rivalries would be purged of all injustice. That is the essence of the equalitarian ideas of Socialism. We have no intention of discussing whether they are, in fact, well founded and possible of realization. Our only object here is to demonstrate the bad faith of Stalinist augmentation.

And similarly let us waste no time on the obviously ridiculous Stalinist habit of describing equalitarianism as "bourgeois"; it is merely a transparent propaganda trick. Everything distasteful to the Soviet power is derided and condemned as "bourgeois." Incidentally, it is amusing to note that although Stalin vigorously applauds social inequality, raising it even to the level of a Socialist principle, he waxes indignant when he is accused of reintroducing privileges. Such rapid oscillation from hypocritical denials to scholastic justifications is typical of the confusion of all régimes caught red-handed in an offence against mankind.

The Outward Signs of the Social Hierarchy

The Russian Revolution in November, 1917, spectacularly demonstrated its contempt for any social hierarchy by abolishing all emblems of rank, decorations, orders and all compulsory signs of respect such as saluting. Naturally, function and office retained the pyramidal form essential in all organized societies, but the Bolshevik leaders symbolized their contempt for privilege by taking no higher title than that of "Comrade," which was common to all. Bolshevism thought to destroy the spirit of caste by abolishing the apparatus of caste.

Decorations were reintroduced even during Lenin's life. The

first man to receive the new revolutionary order, known as "The Order of the Red Flag," was Trotsky. When Stalin came to power he instinctively harked back to the policy of Napoleon and greatly increased the number of decorations. On August 17th, 1936, Soviet newspapers published an Order of the Day conferring various orders, the Order of Lenin, the Red Star, the Red Flag and the Insignia of Honour, on 1,494 officers, political workers, technical experts and doctors of the Red Army. And on December 27th, 1938 (*Izvestia* of the following day), a new Order was introduced by Stalin to take precedence over all other Soviet honours. This was the title "Hero of Socialist Labour," and the first recipient was Stalin himself.

On January 16th, 1943, a further decree reintroduced the wearing of epaulettes by commissioned ranks in the Red Army (*Izvestia* of the following day). An eruption of gold braid followed which astonished a good American democrat like William White:

"Soldiers salute each other here at all distances. . . . In the armed forces of the Western nations there is relatively little difference between the uniforms of officers and men, but in Russia no sort of confusion is possible; officers shine and sparkle a long way off. In the countries of Western Europe heroes modestly keep their medals shut away somewhere in drawers, but on the breasts of Soviet officers medals of gold and bronze clink in serried lines."

The uniforming and regimentation of trades and professions which was so characteristic of Czarism was greatly extended by Stalin during the war. The *Izvestia* informs us that railwaymen (September 5th, 1943), judges (September 25th, 1943) and diplomats (October 9th, 1943) were successively uniformed and regimented.

In the same way, and in the same spirit, marks, prizes, rewards and punishments have been reintroduced in Soviet schools, although they were all abolished in a clean sweep by the Russian Revolution. A decree was issued on September 3rd, 1935, ordering the wearing of uniform by all pupils from the elementary schools upwards. In this case the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak, and the decree has remained a dead letter owing to the inability of Stalin's planned economy to provide the requisite uniforms. School regulations have been radically changed and a semi-military discipline introduced into all schools (*Izvestia*, September 4th, 1935). And an appeal was published in the *Bulletin of the People's Commissariat of Education* on April 10th, 1935, signed by Epstein, calling for "the mobilization of all pupils for the reinforcement of school discipline" and holding up to the contempt of "all true revolutionaries" such innovations of the November Revolution as "the pupils' republics" and "school self-government." Luciani, former correspondent of the *Temps* in Moscow, quotes from an interesting article written

by Radek describing obedience as the main duty of the Soviet schoolboy:

"The young citizens of the Soviet Union must obey their schoolmasters as the Red soldier obeys his superiors—and the worker obeys his foreman."

And in the *Gutsch Gazieta* of August 7th, 1943, the Soviet Minister of Education, Potemkin, writes like any Fascist schoolmaster:

"The experience of all the best teachers has long ago refuted all the idle chatter about the alleged harmfulness of punishment. . . . Persuasion merely hampers the training of schoolchildren to discipline."

The *Kraznaya Zverda* of June 17th, 1946, publishes a decree signed by Stalin making peacetime discipline in the Red Army even more severe than wartime discipline. It declares, amongst other things, that "commanders must not overlook even the slightest infraction of discipline, and must severely punish all offenders." The decree also stresses the necessity of absolute punctiliousness in performing all the outward gestures of respect for rank.

Neo-Chauvinism

The Russian Revolution was essentially international and anti-militarist in character. Lenin insisted on a breach with the Second International because in 1914 it chose to forget that "the workers have no Fatherland." The Constitution of 1936 put the title of "Socialist Fatherland" away in the lumber-room with all the other revolutionary props, and thenceforth Russia was a "Fatherland" pure and simple. At the peace conference of Brest-Litovsk, Lenin did not hesitate to sacrifice territory in order to safeguard the new democratic conquests, but, in his negotiations with Hitler, Stalin showed no hesitation in sacrificing democratic anti-Fascist principles in order to obtain territory.

On December 12th, 1936, the *Pravda* published a symposium entitled "Sacred Love of Country," including poetical exaltation of the country of Russia's forefathers: "With its fields, forests and rivers, my country has no equal in the world" (quoted by Albert Silbert, pp. 207-8). And in the peace and comfort of his office in the Soviet Academy Alexis Tolstoy takes fire:

"Love of country! I hurl myself into the mortal combat, its song upon my lips. . . . I have no need for many words to recognize my enemy; I recognize him by the foreign glint in his eye. . . . I am the son, the flesh of the flesh, the blood of the blood, of my beloved country; and love of country is always accompanied by jealous vigilance" (*V.O.K.S. Bulletin*, 1939, p. 40).

This exalted patriotic lyricism is accompanied by a revival of the old authentic Russian militarism. Red Army exhibitions such as the one opened at Kiev on April 24th, 1939, on the three

hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Russia's artillery forces, display portraits of Russian "bourgeois" generals of former days, their frames decorated by red bunting. The process went a step further when a decree issued on July 29th, 1942, replaced the Order of Lenin and the Order of the Red Flag by the Order of Kutsutov, the Order of Suvarov and the Order of Nevsky for the Army. At the same time the deeds of derring-do attributed to soldiers of the Red Army are reminiscent of the traditional fairy tales of the Middle Ages. Listen to the *V.O.K.S. Bulletin* No. 1 of 1938, pp. 22-3:

"Ten Japanese soldiers hurled themselves on a young soldier of the Red Army named Draguine. The latter did not flinch. With bayonet point and rifle butt, he littered the ground with Japanese corpses. Although he received four bayonet wounds, his arm was firm, and terrible were the blows he dealt. Seized with panic, the other Japanese fled, but, although severely wounded and suffering from loss of blood, Draguine pursued them and killed them all. Only then did he sink to the ground himself."

It is interesting to note in passing that Soviet patriotism increasingly takes on the character denounced by the Bolsheviks of 1917 as "purely bourgeois." Stalin is no longer willing to distinguish between "the masses of the people exploited and militarized against their will" in the countries of Russia's enemies, and their imperialist governments, which was the essence of the revolutionary Bolshevik attitude to war. When defiance is hurled at "the traitorous Japanese" and "the bloody Germans," the abuse includes all Japanese and all Germans without specific exception. In the eyes of the rulers of the Soviet Union, all class character has disappeared from the countries which are enemies of Russia, just as it has, incidentally, from those countries which are, or were, allies in arms of Russia. Thus we are compelled to conclude that classes exist only in the Blessed Land of Socialism when it is a matter of annihilating the "*kulaks*" or "the counter-revolutionaries."

The late war severed the last surviving relations between this patriotic Soviet nationalism and the ideology of Socialism. On March 15th, 1944, the "International" ceased to be the anthem of the Soviet Union and was replaced by a strictly nationalist anthem, the text of which begins:

*"Great Russia has cemented for ever
The inviolable Union of Free Republics.
We shall lead our country to glory . . ."*

and so on.

The greed of Soviet Russia for new territory, bases and concessions is an authentic revival of the old imperialism and traditional pan-Slavism of the Czars. Stalin's representatives at the Congress

of Bratislava in 1945 harped constantly on the Slav virtues and on the brilliant future awaiting the Slav races if they united with Russia "on the basis of blood."

At the beginning of 1946 sudden territorial claims were put forward against Turkey in as chauvinist a fashion as anything perpetrated by the Czars. The folklore experts, the popes, the travel agencies, all began to prove loudly that this, that and the other Turkish town had formerly (1,000 years before) belonged to the Georgian race, that this, that and the other dialect word has its roots in some original Georgian word, that the types on both sides of the frontier were ethnographically similar—in short, that from way back in the historical past, and deep down in his entrails, each inhabitant of the disputed territory felt an imperious urge to reunite himself with his glorious Georgian past—safely within the expansive bosom of Mother Russia, of course.

One of the amusing results of this neo-patriotism in Russia is Stalin's effort to re-write history. This pretended revolutionary is haunted by the need to find illustrious precedents for himself in the oldest possible national traditions. Peter the Great has been taken as the psychological model—with a little titivation, as witness his character sketch in the *V.O.K.S. Bulletin* of March, 1938:

"Commander of the armed forces, intelligent, warlike and audacious. . . . A man passionately in love with life and the institution of the family (!), and prepared to deliver up his own beloved son to death in the interests of his country."

The parallel with the renovator of the Soviet family, Stalin, whose first wife committed suicide and who had his own son arrested, is obvious.

An article published in the *Pravda* on March 31st, 1939, accuses historians of the nineteenth century of having done an injustice to the memory of Ivan the Terrible, of having "superficially" confined themselves to condemning his despotism, and forgetting his conquest of Siberia and his defeat of the Tartars. Another patriotic offensive has been launched in the authentic racial style against the theory currently held by responsible historians that the Empire of Kiev was founded not by indigenous Russians, but by Vikings from the north.

The *Izvestia* chants the praises of "the victorious standards of Suvarov, great Captain, whose strong arm Kutzutov defeated the great Napoleon." For the information of readers unacquainted with Russian history, Suvarov was the reactionary general who brutally crushed the peasant revolt under Pugatcheff, a former revolutionary hero. This peasant revolt, formerly held in high honour by Russian revolutionaries and associated with the common ideal of liberation from the yoke of Czarism, is now despised as an anarchical Jacquerie.

Like all sudden changes of policy in the Soviet Union this one claimed its victims too, and the Russian intelligentsia suffered a new purge. The Russian historian Platonov was sent into exile to die. Tairov, once the life and soul of the famous Kamerny Theatre in Moscow, was "liquidated" for having produced an opera by the once-popular Soviet bard, Demian Biedny, who had thought to serve the cause of dialectical materialism and emancipate the proletariat from feudal prejudices by debunking the "Bogatyr's," the doughty heroes of Old Russian song and story. The wheel had turned, and it crushed them both. On the other hand, Glinka's old opera, *A Life for the Czar*, which celebrates the deliverance of Russia from foreign intervention in the sixteenth century, has come into its own again under the new title of *Ivan Sussanine*, and we are told that it "produces an irresistible impression on the officers and men of the Red Army. . . . The music is charged with ardent inspiration. Supported by several orchestras, powerful choirs thunder 'Glory to Thee, Czar of Russia'" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, February 27th, 1939).

Family Life and the Birth-rate

Socialist thought on the problem of the family has always been rather ambiguous. Socialist extremists have declared that the family group is a hot-bed of conservatism and reaction, and demanded that the education of the youth should be entirely in the hands of the State. Other Socialists have sought to conciliate the right of the infant to maternal care and tenderness with the right of parents to follow their own emotional inclinations. Still other Socialists are warm partisans of the family as a social institution, and they even bitterly reproach capitalism with contributing to its destruction. But all Socialists have been on common ground in demanding the emancipation of love from economic bondage, and that, in the words of Sinclair Lewis, there should no more be illegitimate children than there are illegitimate cloud-bursts.

Although these ideas are certainly not sufficient to provide clear directives for the delicate reform of sexual life and the upbringing of children, they nevertheless imply certain immediate political conclusions, and these were drawn by Bolsheviks of 1917 when they granted women very considerable rights in their programme: full civic rights, equal pay, facilities for divorce, and State responsibility for the maintenance of children. In addition, they popularized contraceptive measures and made skilled medical abortion legal. Their intention was to give woman the control of her body, to render the sexual embrace independent of procreation, and to make the latter a matter of deliberate and free judgment in line with other decisions in the life of the individual.

Some of their reforms, depending on the increasing well-being of the individual and on the growth of the State social services, were never realized, whilst others threatened to diminish the military power of the dictatorship and encourage the masses to follow their own individual desires. They were abolished by the law of June 27th, 1936, which again prohibited abortion under pain of severe penalties, placed a very high tax on divorce, and decided to register divorce on the domestic passport carried by all Soviet citizens.

"It is high time to declare that frivolity in marital unions is a crime and that infidelity is an offence against the morality of the Socialist régime" (*Izvestia*, July 4th, 1935).

"Free love and sexual disorder are bourgeois things and they have nothing whatever to do with Socialist principles. . . . Our Socialist woman has been granted the joys of maternity. We must watch over our Soviet family and procreate solid Soviet heroes" (*Pravda*, May 28th, 1936).

The last words betray the real preoccupation of the Soviet Government. The *Trud* of April 27th is particularly frank on the point:

"We need men. . . . The Soviet woman has equality of rights with the man, but this does not relieve her of the great and honourable task which devolves on her in the course of Nature. She is a mother and gives life. And that is certainly not a private affair, but a matter of the highest social importance."

As far as women are concerned, Stalin has almost adopted the old ideal of the German bourgeoisie summed up in the initials K.K.K.—*Kirche, Kueche, Kinder*, church, kitchen and children. But the church is replaced by courses in Leninist-Stalinist Marxism—and women are needed in the factories. The role of woman in industrial life remains a fundamental theme in the Stalinist symphony, but more and more the serene virtues of the hearth provide the incidental music.

A play by Ramachov entitled *It Could Happen to Anyone* created something like a furore in the winter of 1946. It is a synthesis of these two themes: the place of woman in the factory—Soviet propaganda encourages girls to become mechanics, locomotive drivers, and so on—and fidelity in love. It describes in touching terms the idyll of the train-guard Natacha and the Red soldier Sacha, and how they remained faithful to each other throughout all the turmoil of war. Numerous Soviet films exalt the officer who returns from the front and kills his wife when he finds she has been unfaithful to him.

A new decree issued on July 8th, 1944, and published in the *Izvestia* the next day goes even farther than the law of June 27th, 1936. It re-establishes the classic elements of marriage: fidelity,

the control of children by their father, and cohabitation. At the same time divorce facilities are rendered so onerous that for the future they are practically closed for ordinary working people. Judgment is transferred from the local administration to a higher court, which has full discretionary powers because there are no fixed legal grounds for divorce. In addition, procedure is rendered long and costly, and the registration fee for divorce is raised to 2,000 roubles, which means, of course, that it has become a privilege of the well-placed bureaucrat.

The *Socialisticheskaya Zamost*, No. 1 of 1939, goes so far as to establish the old traditionalist philosophy of marriage as a categorical imperative for the morals of "the advance guard":

"The very basis of the State is the family. . . . Free unions and adultery are bourgeois institutions which must be combated. The question, once controversial, of the marriage portion has been resolved in the simple reply of a young peasant to Stalin himself: 'A dowry gives young women independence and freedom of choice.'"

The return of Stalinism to the classic conception of the home as the basis of society is a conservative *volte-face*, but the opprobrium which it casts on sexual excess is quite in accordance with traditional Socialist ethics. With very rare exceptions, Socialist theoreticians have never regarded the mere satisfaction of physical instincts as any part of Socialist ideals, even when it is limited to an individual matter not likely to cause any harm to others. Marxist ideas on the subject accord quite well with puritanism in condemning "bourgeois lechery" and idealizing spiritual health (mark "proletarian") made up of sobriety and labour, whilst Marxist morality elevates renunciation rather than pleasure. As the most revolutionary Socialist group, Bolshevism always upheld this morality of sacrifice with particular rigour and always proclaimed the essential virtue of abandoning all hedonist aspirations in the disciplined service of a collective cause.

How is it, then, that these puritanical tendencies of Socialism have not come into conflict with the incontestable epicurianism of its material aims? To demand the shortening of the working day, to aim at providing all with individual liberty and riches, means implicitly to place leisure and pleasure higher in the scale of values than labour and self-sacrifice. It would seem that up to the present Socialist theory has not succeeded in overcoming the confusion which reigns in these grave and complicated problems, or, in fact, that it has even become conscious of the disharmony between its restrictive psychological tendencies and its political and economic aspirations. As one might expect, the ascetic traditions of Bolshevism have been exploited in the Soviet Union against the fulfilment of its liberal ideals. In particular, it has served as a facile ideological cloak for the new law against voluntary abortion.

One of the first tasks to which the Russian Revolution set its hand was the undermining of the traditional power and authority of the Orthodox Church. A decree promulgated on January 23rd, 1918, established the strict separation of Church and State. During the course of the Revolution and the Civil War, almost the entire patrimony of the Church—schools, seminaries, almshouses, convents, monasteries, churches, and even vestments, ikons, chalices and other religious requisites—was confiscated. In 1925 a Militant Atheist Association was founded under the chairmanship of Yaroslavsky. It was officially supported by the Soviet Government in "the good fight against superstition," and it did not a little to enhance the prestige of the Soviet Government in anticlerical circles outside the Soviet Union.

The Soviet power did not confine itself to ideological propaganda in its fight against the Church, but persecuted the clergy, and then the faithful, with increasing rigour. The *Messenger de l'Association Chrétienne des Etudiants Russes* of July, 1927 (quoted in *Russie et Chrétienté*, third quarter, 1946, p. 51) reveals that a whole group of leading Russian priests were sent in a body to the terrible Soviet concentration camp on the Solovietzky Islands. And *Dernieres Nouvelles* of July 24th, 1927, publishes a list of 117 Russian bishops imprisoned or exiled in this way by the Soviet authorities. For years *Russie et Chrétienté* has published a terrible record of cruelties practised by the Soviet Secret Police against the Russian clergy and their flocks: persecution, imprisonment, deportations, and demonstrative *autos-da-fé* at which personal ikons were publicly burnt amidst derision and insult. The facts are notorious and incontestable, and the Soviet authorities have hardly made any attempt to deny them. Inscribed in letters of gold on the Mausoleum of Lenin is the famous phrase: "Religion is opium for the people."

But a change was to come about very rapidly. On June 22nd, 1941, a few days after the German invasion, the whole Soviet Press published an eloquent and stirring appeal from the Orthodox Metropolitan Serge exhorting all the faithful to rally to the Soviet Government and assist in repelling the foreign enemy. The message ended with the solemn words: "The Church of Christ gives its blessing to the defence of the sacred frontiers of the Fatherland."

In August and September, 1941, the priests emerged from a seclusion which had lasted a quarter of a century, and with the benevolent approval of the Soviet authorities they offered up public prayers for a Russian victory, followed by collections amongst the faithful totalling more than 25,000,000 roubles, which were then handed over for military purposes. In 1942 50,000 copies of a well-produced book by the Orthodox Metropolitan Serge entitled *The Truth about Religion in the Soviet Union* were printed in an official

Soviet printing works (there are, of course, no other printing works in the Soviet Union). Bowing to the canons of Stalinist policy, which demand that the past shall always be corrected to accord with the particular policy of the moment, the reverend author denies point blank that there has ever been religious persecution in the Soviet Union. On September 4th, 1943, the new policy towards religion received its consecration. The Tass Agency broadcast the following appeal from Stalin to his people:

"From time immemorial the people of Russia have been imbued with a deep religious sentiment. Since the opening of military operations against Germany, the Church has shown itself in the best possible light. Its ecclesiastics are fighting courageously at the front and every day they give new proof of their patriotism. Therefore the Communist Party of the Soviet Union can no longer deprive the Russian people of their churches and of their liberty of conscience. It is for this reason that I now address myself to the Russian Orthodox Holy Synod in Moscow to ask them to elect a Patriarch of All the Russias from their midst."

Thus "The First Discipline of Lenin" transforms religion from opium for the people into oxygen for the people. But during the course of an interview given to a workers' delegation on September 9th, 1927, this same Stalin declared in his own inimitable style:

"The party cannot be neutral in matters of religion. It conducts propaganda against all religious prejudices of whatever nature, because it is a supporter of science, whilst religious prejudices are opposed to science, all religion being contrary to science. . . . The party cannot be neutral with regard to religious prejudices, and it will conduct propaganda against such prejudices because this is one of the most effective ways of destroying the influence of the reactionary clergy who support the exploiting classes and preach obedience to these classes. The party cannot be neutral with regard to this reactionary clergy who poison the conscience of the revolutionary masses. . . . Have we crushed the clergy? Yes; but the misfortune is that they have not yet been entirely liquidated."

Incidentally, it is interesting to note that in declaring that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union "can no longer deprive the Russian people of their churches and of their liberty of conscience," Stalin admits that up to then the Russian people had been so deprived in violation of Article 124 of his own Constitution, which guarantees "liberty both to religious beliefs and to anti-religious propaganda." The Article itself is impeccable from the point of view of democratic justice, but no sooner has Stalin refurbished one point than he treats the other with contempt, as though some malignant fate has decreed that none of his political changes shall ever partake of the virtue of moderation and that his precious Constitution should always be in a state of being violated. Religion

in the Soviet Union once again enjoys the liberty granted to it by the Constitution, but the liberty of anti-religious propaganda has been withdrawn.

On September 8th, 1943, at the same time that a hurriedly convened ecclesiastical conclave acceded to the request of Stalin and elected the Metropolitan Serge to the supreme religious office of Patriarch of Moscow, the Soviet Government created a "Council for Orthodox Russian Church Affairs" under the direction of Karpoff to assist in resolving ecclesiastical questions. Its first act was to suppress the militant atheist association, which boasted a membership of 6,000,000, and transfer all its patrimony with a stroke of the pen to the coffers of the Orthodox Church. At the same time, of course, the official organs of "this powerful organization of progressive Soviet citizens," as it was the day before, *The Godless Citizen* and *The Anti-Religious Citizen*, were also suppressed, and its printing works handed over to the ecclesiastical authorities, so that the new *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (*J.M.P.*) is printed on the presses which formerly printed the publications of the Antichrist. The change in fortunes could hardly have been more blatantly demonstrated.

After that the position of the Church in the Soviet Union was rapidly consolidated. A plenary conclave, held in conformity with all oecumenical regulations this time, met from January 31st to February 2nd in Moscow and elected a successor to the Moscow Patriarchate (Serge having died on May 15th, 1944) in the person of the Metropolitan of Moscow, Alexis, whose character and career offered an earnest of firm loyalty to the Soviet régime. And during the course of a second "historic interview" with the Holy Synod, which took place on April 10th, 1945, Stalin went farther than any French Government, even the most priest-ridden, would ever have dared to go. Let us hear the report of Nicolas, Metropolitan of the Ukraine:

"Amidst all his many cares, Joseph Vissarianovitch, who has long given us many proofs of his attentive and paternal interest in all the needs and desires of the Orthodox Church . . . expressed his full sympathy with all our projects (which were naturally directed to the extension of the influence of the Orthodox Church) and promised to continue to aid us in the future" (*J.M.P.*, No. 5, Moscow, 1945, pp. 25-6).

It is not astonishing that with such benevolent assistance the Russian Orthodox Church has been able to re-establish its ancient structure in record time. By the middle of 1946 its ramifications were as follows:

The Patriarchate of Moscow;

The Holy Synod;

89 dioceses in the Soviet Union and abroad (in the Soviet

Union the borders of these dioceses coincide with the borders of the new administrative areas);

20,000 parishes with 30,000 priests;

10 seminaries;

2 academies, one of which is the celebrated Theological Academy of Moscow in the Convent of Sergievo;

150 convents; and

8 publications, of which the chief is the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (J.M.P.).

Let us recall in conclusion that the object of this chapter was neither to support nor to oppose Socialist doctrine in matters of religion, but merely to compare it with the chopping and changing policy of a régime which pretends to be faithful to it. The truth is that the doctrines of Socialism are not respected in the Soviet Union to-day, nor were they respected yesterday. For one thing, although it is certainly in accordance with Socialist philosophy to condemn religious beliefs, it is equally certainly contrary to the spirit of Socialism to persecute them. In sending the priests of the Orthodox Church and their followers to concentration camps, the Soviet Government outraged the beliefs of even the most rabid of Socialist atheists. First of all, because any concentration camp is necessarily an abominable institution and abhorrent to any authentic Socialist conscience, and, secondly, because a very minimum of goodwill is sufficient to realize that religious beliefs, however steeped in superstition they may seem to be, generally arise from the moral and metaphysical distress caused by the precarious position of humanity in the world, and cannot in consequence be dissipated by loading mankind with new chains.

Personally, we should wholeheartedly have welcomed the re-establishment of the right to proclaim a belief in the existence of God in the Soviet Union if it had not been accompanied and sullied by the dictatorial abolition of the complementary liberty of conscience to proclaim disbelief in the existence of God. Naturally, the concordat concluded by Stalin with the Russian Orthodox Church was not in the least motivated by any praiseworthy sympathy with the spiritual—and often physical—anguish of true believers in the Soviet Union. It was motivated in the first place by an urgent need to raise the spirits and enhance the combative ardour of the rank and file of the Red Army during the struggle against Nazi Germany, and in the second place by a design, taken over from Czarism, to exploit the international ramifications of the Orthodox Church, once more brought under the provenance of Moscow, to facilitate the aims of Russian imperialism.

We shall return to this question in greater detail in our chapter on Soviet foreign policy.

MORALS, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

"When reason truckles, honesty dies." Victor Hugo.

GRANTED THE DICTATORSHIP, granted the misery—but surely the morals, manners and customs of Soviet man have been cleansed of the vices of self? Surely the Soviet Union has been emancipated from the inhumanity of the great towards the common people, from swindling, deceit, drunkenness, prostitution and all that selfish greed which distorts the better instincts of mankind in countries where material interest is the supreme law?

That such illusions could arise at all indicates a grave lack of understanding for the primary conditions of human civilization. In plain fact neither political terror nor economic poverty are compatible with moral health. Since this axiomatic truth seems still to go unrecognized by many, let us collect here the depressing evidence which bears witness to it in the country of "the moral advance guard."

Contempt for Human Beings

"Great success and great achievements often give birth amongst men little trained in politics to carelessness, smugness, an excessive self-assurance and boastfulness. It is impossible to deny that lately we have been overrun with braggarts" (Stalin, speech delivered at the Grand Opera House on February 8th, 1946).

With these Olympian words, Stalin uttered a warning to those parvenus, his servitors, whose smug self-satisfaction was out of place in "a society without classes."

"The fact that they had gone through a school for engineers gave these gentlemen an arrogance and cocksureness which was often insupportable," writes a French engineer (*Un Français Moyen*, p. 8).

Henri Membré received the same unfavourable impression:

"Sure of themselves, sententious and dogmatic, the bureaucrats are much given to using a pseudo-scientific jargon even to express quite everyday ideas" (Membré, p. 202).

The ubiquitous arrogance of the cadres, a striking antithesis to the hypocritical idealization of the masses, is modelled on the manners of the court. During a campaign launched in June and July, 1939, against the poor yield of agricultural work, the peasants were liberally belaboured with such insults as "slackers," "parasites"

and so on. An order of the Presidium of the Supreme Council, signed by both Stalin and Molotov and published in the *Izvestia* on December 26th, 1938, charges "many workers" with being "sluggards, wasters, and lead-swingers." Like all Soviet accusations and abuse, these too developed into involved and monotonous theories. When Michael Zostchenko, the humorous writer, was disgraced and cast into the outer darkness, the *Izvestia* of August 22nd, 1946, informed its readers that he was "a wily, pedantic, petty-bourgeois Philistine sceptic."

The *Pravda* of December 24th and 25th, 1938, denounces wide strata of the sovereign people as "rips," "slackers," "gadabouts" and "bluffers." Imagine any country in the world, apart from the Fatherland of the Toilers, where the Prime Minister would address workers, as Molotov did at the Eighteenth Party Congress as "idlers" and even "monsters." Of course, an extenuating circumstance for Molotov is that he, like all the other privileged persons in the Soviet Union, must conform strictly to the elevated style of the beloved Father of the Peoples, for whom an opponent is never less than "a slimy snake," "degenerate vermin" or "a mangy dog."

Amidst the rising flood of such insults it is not surprising to find that the lower privileged, the regional secretaries and so on, also belabour the workers (*Pravda*, June 13th, 1937), and that factory directors shamelessly practise all manner of trickery and swindling (*Trud*, July 18th, 1935). Thanks to the "self-criticism," we are occasionally even privileged to hear what the workers themselves think about it. Here, for instance, is a collective letter from miners in the Don Basin published in *Trud* on the same date:

"We are not *letouny* [this is a slang term signifying workers who go from one job to the other like rolling stones; in April no less than 23,000 miners left their jobs] but shock workers. . . . We are indignant and stirred to the depths at the revolting treatment meted out to us. Those above us never address us without cursing. . . . There are frequent irregularities in our pay; sometimes it is late, sometimes they have 'forgotten' to add this or that bonus."

According to the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of March 20th, 1937, it would seem that even children are not spared:

"They [the schoolteachers] call us hooligans, particularly those of us who aren't well dressed. . . . It is only the children of high officials who are not touched."

This arrogance is encouraged by an inherited tradition of Bolshevism: contempt for human life. The romantic aureole conferred on Torquemada by Victor Hugo was exploited to glorify the revolutionary rigours of the years 1917-22, and, later, to lend dignity to the banal brutalities of the years 1930-46.

"A Communist I spoke to about the starving children I had seen

in areas which were normally very fertile did not think it necessary to talk about errors in the distribution of seed corn, about a bad harvest and about imminent measures of assistance; he merely replied indifferently: "That is one of the aspects of the class war" (Méquet, p. 34).

An exceptional case perhaps? Not at all, unfortunately. The American workman, Andrew Smith, records how in the Volga region during the famine he came upon an old woman half naked in the street accompanied by two children who were weeping silently. When he was about to give them something, a Red soldier intervened:

"Don't give them anything, Citizen. Such people don't want to work. They are *kulaks*, enemies of the Soviet régime" (Andrew Smith, p. 149).

And Jacques Berger reports the following reflections of disciplined Stalinists:

"It is better to punish ten innocent people than to let one guilty man escape. . . . Those people who beg are former bourgeois; you ought to be glad they are reduced to beggary. . . . It won't matter that a million or so people died of hunger during the battle for the Five-Year Plan when later on first-class factories will permit us to feed another 10,000,000 workers" (Berger, p. 12).

After the execution of the sixteen accused in the first Moscow Process, the *Pravda* rubbed its hands with glee:

"Now that that's done we can breathe more easily; the very air is purer. Our muscles acquire a new vigour, our machines hum a more lively tune, our hands are quicker at their tasks" (quoted by Guilbeaux, p. 78).

Soviet literary lights are not backward in upholding the lyrical prestige of ferocity, and they have ended by lowering Soviet mythology to the level of the Valhalla resuscitated by Hitler:

"It is not with books that we shall win the victory, but with blows of our fists; not by moaning and lamenting, but by bombs, machine-guns and bloodshed. Blood remains blood whatever you do to hide it. Shed as little blood as possible, they say, but that is Jesuitry."

The above lines are quoted from a novel written by Savinkov in 1912 entitled *That Which did not take Place*. It was re-published in 1930 to become a Bolshevist classic, and at the same time the passages in which other characters disputed the right to kill were deleted.

The well-known Soviet writer Gladkov, best known outside the Soviet Union for his novel, *Cement*, won new laurels with a novel on the Dnieperstroi entitled *Energy*, a very tough performance which condemns all charitable sentiments as "female ailments." Here is a typical quotation:

“ ‘You don’t get far with the heart,’ he said. ‘In battle one ought to tear it out and throw it to the devil. In battle I would destroy the first who drew back . . . at the sight of blood’ ” (quoted by Basily, pp. 175-6).

We are not ignorant of the fact that such ferocious imagery has the power to stir up the ancestral heritage of man, cruelty. Marxists who denounce the impotence of reformism and proclaim the inevitability of bloodshed feel themselves obliged to trick out their ferocity with an austere and terrible nobility and to idealize methods which may be inevitable, but are certainly primitive. Redoubtable virtues are always suspect. The chant in praise of terror is nothing but an echo of the fire dance of the ancient sorcerers. Let us send these totalitarian adepts of carnage back to the words of a revolutionary whose life knew no bloodshed except her own:

“Determined revolutionary activity coupled with a deep feeling for humanity, that alone is the real essence of Socialism. A world must be overturned, but every tear that flows and might have been stanchd is an accusation; and a man hurrying to a great deed who knocks down a child out of unfeeling carelessness commits a crime” (Rosa Luxemburg in the *Rote Fahne*, December, 1918).

Self-interested Sentiment

“It is difficult to think nobly when one thinks only to earn one’s bread.” Extending that adage of Rousseau, Marxism assumes with some justification that petty thoughts are inevitable when there is a shortage of bread. When a society is racked by misery, when the battle for life grows bitter and savage, then venality and hatred break down the dams which temporary well-being has erected against them. The Black Market which existed in all the belligerent countries during the war, and continues to exist to-day in times of shortage, is an excellent demonstration of this fact. Similarly, the housing crisis in the Soviet Union—for it is more than a shortage—is at the root of the worst instances of moral depravity.

We know that in the Soviet Union the housing space available *per capita* decreased rapidly until in 1937 it was only 4.3 square metres. The following is a description of the situation in Moscow:

“Most of the huts in which the workers building the Metro live are filled to overflowing. It is not uncommon to see couples living in promiscuity in the same hut as single men” (*Trud*, June 6th, 1934.)

The houses of the workers are not only grossly overcrowded, but they are often greatly dilapidated:

“Twenty-two per cent. of the workers employed at the Gorki motor works live in huts. In winter all the water is frozen and in

the summer bugs are everywhere. . . . There are no drains at all" (*Za Industrializatsiu*, July 14th and 21st, 1934).

"In the forestry camp at Berezovsk men and women live promiscuously in huts of a provisional type built in the middle of marshland. The rain beats through the roofs" (*Uralski Rabotchi*, July 27th, 1937).

We shall return to this atrocious housing shortage, which is aggravated by an equally atrocious shortage of underwear, bed-clothes and furniture. For the moment we are interested in the psychological and moral consequences.

Pierre Luciani, Moscow correspondent of the *Temps*, records an incident which does not suggest a people in the full tide of fraternity: a pretty girl from the provinces, wishing to instal herself and her family in Moscow, hooked the occupier of a suitable room as a husband. No sooner was she installed in his home than she showed herself to be shrewish, capricious and intractable. Obviously, the only solution was divorce. But in consequence of her marriage to the original occupier, she now had as much right to the room as he had. An advertisement then appeared in the Press: "One large and beautiful room for exchange against two smaller rooms in different parts of the town."

And Luciani concludes the story: "The 'large and beautiful room' of the original occupier found plenty of takers. The wily little provincial had found a place for her family in Moscow and now brought them from the country. But the original occupier had lost his 'large and beautiful room'—not to mention a wife—and now had a smaller one elsewhere" (Pierre Luciani, pp. 227 *et seq.*).

Brutality by men who have married women merely for their rooms and then desire to get rid of them is widespread, and the *Pravda* of August 9th and 26th, 1935, and the *Izvestia* of December 28th, 1936, provide us with plenty of evidence.

Writing in the review *Esprit* on April 1st, 1936, Victor Serge, former member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and a professor in Moscow, tells the story of an uncanny and horrifying battle waged around the room of an old woman who was on the point of dying; a more poignant drama than the one described by Balzac in connection with the heritage of the dying cousin, Pons. The news, whispered perhaps the tenth of a tone too high, was overheard by the sharp ears of an interested party through the matchboard wall. From that moment on the house knew no other interest. The man living in the corridor believed himself in the direct line of succession. But the woman doctor who lived in one corner of a room thought her claim an even better one, whilst the Communist wounded during the Civil War declared that his prerogative was sacred. And the two couples living side by side

separated only by a sheet. . . . And the father of three children who lived with his family in a disused drain covered with a board. . . . And the old book-keeper who was a G.P.U. agent. . . . And . . . The rivalry developed into animosity, the animosity into execration, and soon more nervous energy was being expended by the angry tenants to keep each other out than in the comings and goings to obtain priority rights for themselves. If they could safely have killed! . . . How often are such matters settled in the end by the classic resort: a denunciation to the G.P.U., which succeeds in hauling the rival out of his bed early in the morning perhaps—oh joy!—never to return to it.

As the result of an investigation made by Zags (the Soviet Civil Marriage Registry) the *Izvestia* of July 4th, 1935, admits:

"There are numerous marriages of a fictitious nature entered into solely in order to obtain the right of residence in Moscow or the right of domicile. Many divorces are the consequence of such marriages."

But even divorce does not always put an end to the suffering, and Luciani reports:

"A husband having divorced his wife is desirous of ejecting her from their common room for the purpose of installing her successor. The first wife, having nowhere else to go, refuses to be ejected. The housing tribunal supports her in her refusal, and the new couple have no alternative but to live their married life with the first wife in the same room" (Luciani, p. 162).

Identical cases are reported in the *Pravda* Nos. 145 and 159 of 1935. Listen to a woman in like case who lightens her suffering heart in the *Trud* of September 30th, 1935:

"It is a terrible thing when one has lost all intimacy, moral and physical, with a man one once loved to have to go on living with him in the same room, to feel hostile eyes always on oneself and on the children, eyes always watchful and often hateful. And if that were only all! The constant spying, the heavy fist of a drunken brute, the calumnies, the vicious disputes" (quoted in *Russie et Chrétienté*, November, 1935).

The ravages of such misery spare neither body nor soul. The pure love, unadulterated by material interests, alleged to flourish in the Soviet Union is just one more propaganda myth.

The Little Gangsters

Up to 1935 the Soviet Press was silent concerning all crimes of lust or passion, all offences against manners and morals, all thefts and robberies small or large. It is difficult to believe that this was due to decent reticence, particularly with a régime which has always delighted in making an example of its political punishments.

It was probably due more to a desire to perpetuate the illusion that criminality had disappeared in the Soviet Union.

In 1932-4, with the arrival of the famine and all its accompanying hideousness, it was no longer possible to maintain the conspiracy of silence; the facts had become too blatant. A column of "News Items" was then introduced on to the back page of Soviet newspapers to deal with such matters. Before long the one column became many. On March 29th a decree was issued "prohibiting the manufacture, sale and carrying of sheath knives" (*Izvestia*, March 30th, 1935). Up to then banditry of all sorts had enjoyed immunity from the serious punishments meted out to crimes of opinion, but now a wave of repression began, and punishments were imposed for offences against private property almost as severe as those imposed for offences against public property.

"In three cases of robbery committed against individuals without violence and without attempted violence, three robbers were condemned to death and executed in Moscow on April 1st, 4th and 8th respectively" (*Izvestia*, April 9th, 1935).

The *urkis*—that is to say, common criminals—began to swell the regular transports of political opponents, "dekulakized" peasants, members of religious sects, "wreckers" and "formalists" sent off to populate the convict settlements. Ivan Solonievitch, a former sports instructor and journalist in the Soviet Union, writes:

"In the convict camps of the White Sea Canal 15 per cent. of the prisoners were common criminals. If this proportion is taken to apply to all other camps, then the resultant figure would be in the neighbourhood of a million" (Solonievitch, p. 50).

The arrival of these *urkis* in large numbers introduced the law of the jungle into the camps. The muscular prisoner ate two rations; the unfortunate weakling went without.

"In short, unless we were possessed of some considerable physical strength we were literally deprived of everything. The unfortunate declassed elements, such as our friend the book-keeper or the engineer, who came by mischance into the penal settlements of the G.P.U., were immediately the prey of the *urkis*" (*ibid.*, p. 44).

Theft became endemic. Women doing their cooking in communal kitchens dared not leave their pots for a moment, for if they did the contents would vanish in their absence (Andrew Smith and Victor Serge). Barmine took a Buick with him from Europe. When he saw it again it had been completely stripped of all its accessories: "Everything which was at all removable had been stolen on board the Soviet boat" (Barmine, p. 296). Kléber Legay and Yvon Delbos both bear witness to the multifarious trickery and thieving which goes on in trains, at railway stations and in Soviet hotels. Pickpockets swarm on the open markets, and at night pedestrians are knocked down and robbed in the side streets.

And the Bigger Ones

The age-old order has not changed under the Stalinist régime: below the hungry little thieves are harassed by the police and outlawed by public opinion, and above well-fed crooks are in the good books of those in power and enjoy the respect of their victims.

However, sometimes the Soviet Press gives the bigger thieves the honour of the front page. From a certain level self-criticism begins to operate. By arrangement, patent scandals are permitted to burst in order to splash innocent men destined for the gallows. Thus we cannot guarantee that all those held up to public obloquy from time to time in the Soviet Press are really scoundrels. It is sufficient for us to know on this unimpeachable evidence that scoundrelism exists on a wide scale in the Soviet Union.

"Many Young Communists and presidents of *kolkhozes* have dossiers charging them with theft, dissipation, the appropriation of public property and monies, violence, debauchery and drunkenness. . . . The President of the *kolkhoze* 'Nikitenko' (in the Vinitua area) having suffered a rebuff at the hands of the young Stakhanovite Vakulenska, caused her deportation and that of her entire family" (*Sovietskaya Justitsia*, April, 1937).

"Afanassiev, President of a big *kolkhoze*, pursued the female members of the *kolkhoze* with his attentions and defrauded the *kolkhoze* of money, which he then spent shamelessly in drinking and other excesses" (*Izvestia*, September 1st, 1937).

Champenois, correspondent of France-Presse in Moscow, a witness very favourably disposed towards the Soviet régime, reports revelations made in August, 1946, by Khrustchev, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, concerning "numerous high officials of the party who received bribes and other illegitimate advantages from heads of enterprises who paid them out of their own defalcations" (*Informations et Documentation*, Ministry of Information, Paris, September 7th, 1946).

From the one region of Azov alone the *Pravda* of February 14th, 1937, reported eleven convictions of presidents of *kolkhozes* for defalcations. Ten days later the number had risen to sixty-one (*Izvestia*, February 24th, 1937). The *Pravda* of May 31st, 1937, referred to "millions of roubles misappropriated by the responsible authorities in the Ordjonnikidze Region."

A typical characteristic of life in the Soviet Union is again visible here. Misappropriation, defalcation, swindling, etc., by "higher-ups" in a civilized country are almost always marked by very considerable ingenuity, suggesting a rare battle of wits between the swindlers and a society insistent that its standards of public probity shall be maintained. But in the Soviet Union the grossest

and clumsiest methods are used with depressing persistence; usually the simple falsification of figures by patent erasures.

On May 16th, 1937, the *Izvestia* reported that trade-union officials in charge of the social insurance funds had misappropriated millions of roubles. And the *Pravda* of October 9th, 1935, reported that at the Hammer and Sickle Works only 26,000 roubles could be accounted for out of a total trade-union fund of 167,000 roubles. The same thing happened in the Stalin motor works.

A speaker at the Eighth Congress of Soviet Labour Unions asked rhetorically: "Where is there theft?" And replied to the question himself: "Everywhere. In the factory committees, in the mutual-aid funds, in the clubs, in the regional sections—in a word, everywhere." The *Voprossy Profsojzenia* of December, 1935, reveals trafficking in connection with the printing and distribution of trade-union cards, and alleges that they are bought and sold like commodities. The *Pravda* of March 26th, 1937, reported that 132,000 employees of the State shops had been hauled before the courts for theft within the space of a year, and, returning to the subject in its issue of May 26th, it estimated that the loss involved was 420 million roubles, or an average of 4,000 roubles per thief per year.

The *Izvestia* of August 27th, 1938, listed 80,000 cases of commercial defalcation for the first six months of the year. Officials engaged in commerce defrauded the general public by giving underweight and charging prices higher than those officially fixed by decree (*Industria*, October 11th, 1937, *Izvestia*, March 29th, 1938, and *Pravda* of March 20th and June 7th, 1938).

Speaking of commercial employees, the President of the Novgorod Soviet made the extraordinary admission: "They cannot help but steal; it is the fault of the system." And the *Pravda* of October 15th, 1938, also admitted: "The existing form of organization opens the door to crimes of this sort."

"Adventurers of all sorts obtain the posts of directors of children's homes. In the District of Archangel alone during the past two years twenty-four directors of children's homes have been dismissed for defalcation" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, No. 33, 1938).

"Good-for-nothings, morally defective persons, misappropriate the sums assigned to crèches and kindergarten" (*ibid.*, No. 41, 1938).

"In Moscow there are 10,000 orphans provided with teachers [by the State]. For years no one thought of obliging even one of these teachers to give an account of his stewardship. The result has been that many of them have turned their office into a means of appropriating living space or exploiting their pupils" (*Izvestia*, July 29th, 1935).

In the general disorder brought about by the Five-Year Plans

the temptations are endless and irresistible for all responsible persons to use bribery or trickery to free their production of the numerous bottle-necks which hamper it. The leaders of trust A are unable to get the material they urgently need unless they bribe the officials of trust B. In order to obtain the promised bribe, the officials of trust B speed up the supply of the materials required by trust A irrespective of the disorganization caused in their own trust. And their clients of trust A seek to recoup their losses in bribes by obtaining bonuses from the Government for the advancement of the Plan, and in order to obtain them they cook their own reports, which results in disorganizing their own affairs. Such an atmosphere encourages the most bare-faced swindles:

"Certain directors have sold the products of their factories for their own personal profit, entering the goods in the books as 'rejects'" (*Pravda*, January 6th, 1937, quoted by the *Bulletin Quotidien* on March 3rd, 1939).

In France at the time of the Stavisky affair, *l'Humanité*, the central organ of the Communist Party, went so far as to call upon its supporters to go on the streets on February 6th and demonstrate side by side with the French Fascists "against corruption and for honesty." In Moscow the newspapers reveal a Stavisky affair every few months.

"Pivovarov, President of the Central Executive Committee of the Region, appropriated 50,000 roubles from State funds for his personal needs. . . . The wives of important officials came to Moscow to buy themselves clothes, and sent the bills to Garnovsky, who paid them out of the local budget" (*Pravda*, March 31st, 1937).

And then there is that related curse of bureaucracy, the pilfering of other people's earnings.

"Pilfering of wages is frequent and nothing is done to prevent it" (*Voprossy Profdoigenia*, December, 1935). "Recently the Regional Committee of the Party has discovered outrageous facts concerning the wage-pilfering which goes on in various factories" (*Leningradskaya Pravda*, June 1st, 1935). "At the Selmach Works in Rostov, wage-pilfering has been discovered on a large scale. No less than 200 cases have been revealed. At the Krasnaya Zmania Works there were no less than 300 cases in January" (*Pravda*, May 27th and 28th, 1935).

Abel, Director of the Plan Control Department, makes shocking revelations concerning this particular type of swindling, known in Russian slang as *obstchoty*. In the refineries in the Vinnitsk Region the workers were robbed of no less than 392,630 roubles out of their wages in the years 1935-6. In one workshop employing only 400 workers an investigation revealed that on an average eighty-six of such *obstchoty* had been perpetrated a month (*Voprossy Profdoigenia*,

March, 1937). One worker in five was found to have been robbed of part of his wages.

"Defalcations in the *kolkhozes* have reached unexampled proportions. . . . Persons in authority have appropriated land belonging to the collective to their own personal use and benefit. . . . The peasants do not receive their legal wages. . . . Cattle, cereals, seeds, dairy products, vegetables and even personal effects are taken away from *kolkhoze* members by responsible officials without any compensation, or at a compensation very much lower than the official prices."

Who spreads these viperous Trotskyite calumnies about Socialist agriculture in the Soviet Union? It is no other than the President of the Socialist Republic himself, Marshal Stalin, in another "historic decree" issued on September 18th, 1946, and published in the *Pravda* on the following day.

Random Harvest

"Tipping has been abolished in the Soviet Union, but if you like to leave a few kopecks under your plate when you go they will be accepted with pleasure. I can vouch for it, for I have made a habit of it" (Bouré, p. 21).

This evidence is confirmed by Ernest Mercier, who declares that the practice of tipping extends even into the G.P.U., and also by the American, Andrew Smith, who during the course of three years spent in the Soviet Union dispensed *baksheesh* on innumerable occasions; and by many other witnesses.

Betting is also popular. Paul Dhmerly has described a visit to the Leningrad Races for us, where bloodstock thunders down the course, where the Tote is in full swing, and where there is, just as at any capitalist racecourse, the "Enclosure" at 10 roubles, and "the grass" at 3 roubles for the masses.

But if young people who despise the turf and the gaming rooms want to spend their free days in the woods around Moscow, other "bourgeois" temptations await them, as witness the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of August 2nd, 1937:

"The woods resound to the shouts of drunkards. Men are scattered around on the grass. . . . Two young men are fighting; one of them is already bleeding profusely."

Vodka, the greatest enemy of the Russian people after the Czar, abolished with the Czar by the Russian Revolution, was re-established in all its rights by Stalin in 1925, despite the anxious warnings of Trotsky and Krupskaya, Lenin's widow. Since then vodka, and all other forms of alcohol—with the notorious consequences of alcoholism in a poverty-stricken country—are everywhere, to the financial profit of the State and the misfortune of its

citizens, as the following letter of a working woman from Dniepropetrovsk published in *Trud*, No. 132 of 1936, indicates:

"I have five children. My husband gives me no help at all. He drinks away his wages in the dram-shop."

The picture depicted in those few simple words is as classic as a verse by Corneille, modest, true, traditional and international like all suffering. It sums up the tragedy of alcoholism.

The conduct of the Soviet soldiery in territories occupied by Soviet armies in 1945 furnishes us with another striking confirmation of the truth that a dictatorship can never strengthen the morale of those who live under it. The outrages perpetrated by whole regiments of the Red Army have never been published by the Anglo-American authorities—although they are well informed as to the facts—in order not to embarrass their Russian allies. But despite this official conspiracy of silence the terrible truth has filtered through by innumerable private channels, officious revelations of accredited diplomats, confidential communications from official war correspondents, letters and statements from prisoners of war in Eastern Germany subsequently released by the Russian advance, and from evidence collected and carefully sifted by various associations for the liberation of the occupied territories—for instance Verax (Casimiro), *Europe o Genhis Khan?*, pseudonym of the Lithuanian Legation in Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, 1945, and the *Latvian Information Bulletin*, Washington, January, 1945.

All in all it must now be regarded as firmly established that, apart from a number of élite formations, the bulk of the Red Army committed excesses of a nature and a magnitude practically unknown to-day to the morals and habits of modern armies. Most of the women who fell into their hands were violated; not only those who belonged to enemy countries, but even citizens of allied countries interned in Germany. Shop fronts were smashed, barrels staved in, barns pillaged. The men plundered to their hearts' content. Men and women were killed and mutilated. Simple manufactured goods of personal use, such as rings, watches, fountain pens and so on, were most coveted objects. When it proved too difficult to slip a ring off a finger, the finger was cut off, writes a French correspondent to whose friend this happened.

Let us admit that all this was the work of uncouth peasants hardly touched by civilization before being called up from the farthestmost wilds of the Russian steppes, and that such ruffians do not represent the régime as a whole. But it still remains a fact that the régime left them in their ruffianism. The claim made by Stalinist propaganda that morals and manners have been elevated, and that the benefits of culture have been spread throughout the Soviet Union, even to the most backward populations, is seen to be false by the horrid example given by the great mass of the Red

Army. The native cruelty of the Buriats, the Uzbeks and the Georgians has not been lessened in the least since the days of Czarism.

The "kept woman" has always been one of the favourite objects of anti-capitalist criticism. Leading a lazy, parasitic life, having no general interests, surrounded by luxury and the flattery of her "protector," she offered an inviting target for the contempt of the workers as one of the least defensible features of the exploitation they suffered. But, in fact, that poison ivy of social inequality has found good soil in the Soviet Union, where it flourishes profusely.

"In Moscow to-day there is a whole class of 'Torgsin Babas,'¹ the parasitic mistresses of foreigners, who are the envy of their comrades who have remained employees or factory workers. . . . They hold court amongst a circle of friends who hope in their turn to be presented to such noble visitors, for men with *valuta* in their pocket-books are the objects of universal respect" (Fleury, p. 34).

From numerous references to "the hunt for a rich husband," it would seem that the indolent satiety of the boudoir is not confined to this particular class of woman (*Izvestia*, No. 125 of 1936), a hunt which is rendered still more determined by the fact that alimony is proportionate to salary.

And, finally, let us note a curious extension of the institution of private charity, that "hypocrisy" despised by Socialists as crumbs offered to those who have been robbed of their rightful share of the loaf that in the end they might be convinced of the benevolence of the robbers. On May 10th and 11th, 1936, a congress took place in Moscow of patron Soviet ladies, the wives of administrators, engineers and technicians, officially designated as "not gainfully employed." The number of such ladies not gainfully employed must be quite considerable, because, according to the *Pravda* of May 10th there were no less than 3,000 delegates present—always allowing for the fact that there are plenty of "delegates" available for any congress whatever in the corridors and offices of the G.P.U. in Moscow. These ladies decided at their congress to occupy themselves with the organization of model restaurants, the decoration of kindergarten, the improvement of collective lodgings, and the assistance of libraries and clubs. This new advanced form of the class struggle was entitled "the wives' movement."

"The diligent hands of women . . . bring a little comfort into the hutments, and cause green grass to grow around them. Officers' wives superintend the preparation of food in the canteen, organize educational circles, and work in crèches, restaurants and clubs" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, December, 1936).

¹ "Torgsin Baba," a term of contempt for such women who thanks to their relationship with the holders of *valuta* are enabled to make their purchases in the State shops for foreigners (Torgsin).

Whilst the satisfied seek in philanthropy a reason to live, their impoverished sisters resort to prostitution as a means of remaining alive at all. Even sympathizers with the régime admit the existence of this "bourgeois blot" in the Soviet Union (Albert Silbert, p. 159). And the staunchly Stalinist Professor Pons, a member of the Friends of the Soviet Union, is compelled to write:

"There are still many ugly things, many stains, many terrible things. Prostitution is more widespread than one cared to believe. Side by side with the hardened and most vicious prostitute elements of the pre-war period there is now prostitution of the youth, and that is lamentable" (Jean Pons, p. 75).

The organized industry of bawdy houses and the regulated commerce of registered women of the streets are both prohibited by law. What does exist in the Soviet Union is casual prostitution, the natural outgrowth of extreme misery, practised very often as a supplement to normal income. Its existence is sometimes officially admitted; for instance, according to the *Molodaya Guardia* of December, 1935, prostitution flourishes even in the schools, and in consequence the People's Commissariat of Education has had to issue instructions to teachers to combat the scourge. From an item in the *Izvestia* of October 26th, 1935, one can deduce that statistics referring to the state of prostitution exist in Moscow:

"Amongst a group of arrested prostitutes five were students, 177 working girls and ninety-two female employees, whose miserable wages compelled them to supplement their income in this fashion. G—, eighteen years old, lived in one room with her mother, her father, her father's second wife, and two adult brothers. She and her baby had been abandoned by her husband. None of the five members of her family had helped her to find a place for her child in a home and to get work. Suffering hunger, she went on to the streets. . . ."

A Revolution inspired at least in part by the indignation of a Zola, a Revolution which swore solemn oaths that such things should not be, has painfully turned back to them, turned back to such ruined lives—deprived even of pity because they are too numerous (when they are not imputed to "vice" with the cynical and knowing smiles of the well-fed and the well-clothed)—turned back to the ashes which have never known a flame.

And Russian society has not even a Zola.

Since it is a matter of morals, and since in this respect accusations are particularly hurtful, let us add that we have been compelled to insist on degrading facts to the extent to which their existence has been denied. We are not unmindful of the fact that side by

side with the inevitable stigmata of hunger and fear there exist exemplary lives in the Soviet Union and all the virtues "which the world most holds in common." There are humane and honourable superiors, husbands and wives united by love, scrupulous leaders, honest officials, sober consumers, tactful soldiers, women who maintain amidst the worst distress the desire to live for progress, and men who stand loyally by their side, aiding them nobly in their task. Vice exists in the Soviet Union as it exists everywhere, as it always existed everywhere. And if it takes on certain more serious forms there, it is not because Russians particularly suffer blemishes, but simply and solely because they are suffering a particularly rigorous form of oppression and exploitation.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN

"Naturally, we do not in the least desire that woman should be placed on the same footing as men in respect of productivity, the intensity, the duration, the volume and the conditions of labour. We desire that her economic position and the primitive and deadening tasks of the household, should not force her into a condition of inferiority." Lenin, in a speech to the Fourth Congress of Working Women in Moscow on September 23rd, 1919.

THERE IS PERHAPS NO sphere in which Soviet propaganda has claimed so much credit for the Soviet régime as in that of the emancipation of women. The Russian woman has been emancipated and liberated from age-old prejudices; she is happy and the equal of man—such is the stirring theme so cleverly and insistently played by the innumerable instruments of Soviet propaganda that a powerful echo has come from international public opinion. Even staunch anti-Stalinists feel they must exempt the work of the Soviet Government in favour of women from their criticisms. Cannot women in the Soviet Union occupy the highest offices the State has to confer? Are not the more onerous forms of labour spared to her on account of her sex? Do not mothers in the Soviet Union enjoy paid holidays, special allocations, special work pauses for suckling their babies, and so on? Are not crèches free to all in the Soviet Union? Do not tourists return with particularly warm approval of the famous one they saw at the river port of Khimky?

Let us examine the facts.¹ But before doing so two observations appear desirable.

It may seem regrettable that our investigation into the condition of women and children in the Soviet Union should be based on material dated some years back. That condition, one might object, is less closely dependent on the structural vices of the régime, and is therefore susceptible to rapid improvement even if the dictatorship as a whole still sticks in the mire. However, it is sufficient to take the ravages of war into account to realize beyond all question that no such improvement can have come about in the meantime, and that, in fact, things must necessarily have grown worse.

Once again, "self-criticism" furnishes the essential part of our

¹ The numerous documents made use of in this and the following chapters have been quoted from the bulletin of the Dominican centre for the study of Russian affairs, *Russie et Chrétienté*, 1935-9.

documentation. Now, the gravity of the published facts, the crudeness of their expression, and the blame placed on subaltern authorities are such that the reader might feel inclined to regard the whole as a proof of democracy, a circumstance which could not but astonish him in view of so many previous proofs of the existence of a stifling dictatorship. However, if he examine the texts a little more closely he will find that this "self-criticism" never attacks either higher officials still in office or the policy of the party, and that it never amounts to an encouragement of any opinions contrary to that policy; in short, that it does not really represent a dispute between ordinary citizens and the authorities, but is merely an instrument for carrying out certain designs of the authorities in the full light of publicity.

From time to time the Soviet Press does engineer an imitation of a public debate, but in such cases the subject of discussion is always unpolitical. For instance, Stalin permitted a public discussion on the relatively neutral theme of abortion. Is it going too far to suspect, in view of the widespread purges which followed the discussion, that one of its aims was to complete the dossiers of disaffected minor citizens scattered over the country? Amongst the letters sent in by an élite—the only stratum capable of putting an idea down on paper—the Press published a carefully-chosen symposium of the less devastating documents. But even from this double sifting a general cry of despair went up at the announcement of the new demographic policy of the Soviet Government. How can a man procreate his species with a good heart and bring up his children decently when he and his wife live in a dormitory or a hut? When he and his wife can hardly feed themselves? When everything indispensable to early childhood is unobtainable? When crèches are so expensive and so badly run? When a father and mother must produce a seventh child before being granted a bonus? When vodka never ceases its ravages? When a man must spend so many of his evenings at meetings?

Thanks to the moving solidarity of all human problems, the public discussion on abortion suddenly brought the vast mass of distress in the Soviet Union into the full light of day, naked and palpitating. In the space of a few weeks, it provided an extraordinary mine of irrefutable documents on the conditions of life of the masses. We have repeatedly drawn on these documents in this book.

The Russian people did not have to wait long for the reaction of their Government. The discussion was suddenly cut off from one day to the next, and the new law was put into immediate operation against the overwhelming desire of the masses of the Russian people. It was another devastating proof of that Machiavellianism which is always behind those rare instances when the Soviet Government appears to canvass the opinions of its subjects.

Double Work for the Same Wage

The Soviet woman is the equal of the man. Let us admit this axiom. But for it to mean much the conditions of the Soviet man would have to be worthwhile. The present book describes them from the political point of view. On this plane, the plane of slavery, the woman is indeed the equal of the man. As far as material conditions are concerned, we have seen a people the immense majority of whom hardly get enough food to satisfy their daily hunger, who lack the great majority of all ordinary manufactured goods, and who live in sordid conditions. The Soviet woman is the equal of the man—that should mean that in exchange for hard work she receives a sum less than the unemployment support paid in capitalist countries to unemployed workers with which to feed herself, clothe herself, keep a roof over her head, bring up her children and run her household.

But it is not true that the Soviet woman is the equal of the man.

Trade unionism favours "the rate for the job," and has always been opposed to the payment of different wages for the same work either as the result of capitalist favouritism or as the result of the extra-exploitation of working strata unable to defend themselves. It never desired, on the other hand, that wages should be equal only in return for equal labour measured in the amount of physical energy expended. To have done so would have been to approve the setting of a premium on muscular strength and energy in defiance of that protection of the weak which has been a constant inspiration of the working-class movement.

We know that the sound principle of "equal pay for equal work" is not respected in the Soviet Union even for men. On the other hand, its unacceptable corollary "equal pay only for physiologically equal work" is rigorously applied to women workers. In consequence, only female intellectuals and technicians can aspire in practice to equality with their male colleagues. The general fact is confirmed by Pierre Luciani:

"In general, women earn less than men. . . . In consequence of their lower technical level, women are employed in particular in lower-paid work. The fact is incontestable, and incidentally it is officially recognized in the article 'Female Labour' in the *Soviet Encyclopædia*, to which we refer any doubtful reader" (Luciani, p. 167).

Physically powerful men can sometimes escape the general indigence by doing double work. And if, in addition, they chant "Long live Stalin" to the rhythm of their Bolshevik hammers they will be rewarded, not only with a variety of honours, but with 800, 1,000 or 1,200 roubles a month for their heroic example. However, it is difficult for women to rise to such heights. The

published details concerning female Stakhanovites show them all to be under twenty-five years of age: Doussia Vinogradova, Marie Demtchenko, Pacha Angelina, etc. Once they become pregnant they can say goodbye to their bonuses.

During the public discussion incautiously permitted in connection with the Bill to prohibit voluntary abortion, one humble and unanimous complaint constantly recurred amongst the mothers who took part. The following letter published in the *Pravda*, No. 149 of 1936, is typical of them all:

"I have three children and I have had to give up work on their account. My sister has no children. She is an official, and well paid. She often says to me: to have children means to lose your qualifications—sooner have a hundred abortions. At least you retain your rights. And me? I have not been a member of the union for ten years now, and I have lost my qualifications and my health. And if my husband and I were to part now, what would become of me?"

The *Pravda* of August 25th, 1935, frankly admitted that "for many women the birth of a child means a grave threat to their position." The word "qualifications" in the Soviet Union embraces physical strength and vigour, manual skill and technical knowledge. All the attempts, timid or tenacious, of women who seek to give practical significance to the theoretical equality of the sexes come to grief on this rock. Everywhere they are faced with the same obstacle.

"I have three children. I bore them one after the other, and now I am worn out. Work in the factory or the study necessary for technical examinations, . . . calls for much time and energy. . . . Frequent pregnancies and pregnancy leaves prevent any raising of labour qualifications" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, No. 123 of 1936).

A child which falls ill is handed back to the care of its mother by the crèche. The mother must then leave her work, and if she is away for long her trade-union card—that is to say, her right to earn her bread—is taken away and her record of service annulled. Working women in the Soviet Union have begged in vain that such inhuman severities should be discontinued (*Izvestia*, No. 24 of 1936; *Trud*, No. 126 of 1936). Peasant women hampered by their sucklings declare themselves unable to drive horses and ask for other, less profitable, employment (*Socialisticheskoi Zemledelie*, No. 84 of 1938).

The pretended equality of political rights in a country in which there is economic inequality is a theme which has furnished Stalin's propagandists with an inexhaustible mine of sarcasm. A rich capitalist can easily buy up a newspaper and print in it whatever he likes, whilst the poor worker can hardly buy a number of the newspaper to read what he doesn't like. However, the fact is that

the equality of economic rights for the two sexes in the Soviet Union is no less specious, because it is conditioned by an equality of physical means. The woman cannot aspire to the same industrial performance as the man so long as maternity, by which she renders incontestable social service to the State, prevents her from following any higher career. Because wages in the Soviet Union are determined by the amount of production in the workshop, and salaries are determined by the particular position obtained in the bureaucratic hierarchy, women are paid less than men. It is an age-old situation and the Soviet Union has done nothing to change it; all it has done is to cloak it with new hypocrisy.

A Discovery of the Pan-Russian Psycho-technical Congress

Official Soviet sources publish the percentage of women employed in 1935 in the more onerous industries. The comparison with the same percentages for other countries is edifying:

	<i>Soviet Union</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>U.S.A.</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>Italy</i>
Mines . . .	27.9	1	0.6	2.7	0.6	1.8
Metallurgy . .	24.6	3.5	3	3.2	5.4	5.3
Engineering . .	27.4	17.4	6.8	12	17.5	5.7
Building . . .	19.4	2.9	1	1.5	1.2	0.5

Figures from the Gosplan, 1936, and the *I.L.O. Review*.

These figures confirm other evidence, for both Stalinists and anti-Stalinists agree that Russian women are employed in the most arduous forms of labour: they navvy in the streets, they lay drains, they work side by side with male demolition workers on the most dangerous jobs, and they shunt trains at 150 roubles a month.

"We drifted into the moulding shop, where I was surprised and rather dismayed . . . to see young girls shovelling sand. They do this for seven hours a day" (Citrine, p. 225).

Women tear up the road with pneumatic drills; others clean out drains (Basily, p. 275). The French Senator Victor Boret reports that he has seen women in the Soviet Union "with the muscular arms and legs of navvies laboriously shifting heavy weights in an atmosphere at least as exhausting as that of a capitalist blast furnace" (Victor Boret, p. 37). There are only two countries in the world which employ female labour in the mines for work underground, Japan and the Soviet Union. Kléber Legay reports a case where even the rule "equal pay for physiologically equal work" was violated in a flagrant manner. In one gallery a Stakhanovite miner was cutting coal at the face with a pneumatic drill. His wage was 700 roubles a month. A woman working with him loading coal all day into the tubs earned only 150 roubles a month. Kléber Legay, who worked in the mines for over twenty years, declares

that her task was much heavier than that of the coal-cutter (Kléber Legay, p. 58). Mr. Davies, the United States Ambassador, declares that women in the Soviet Union "do exactly the same work as the men" (*The Times*, March 15th, 1937). And on October 10th, 1939, *Trud* announced proudly that "women are taking over the work of the aggregate groups [an aggregate is the simultaneous operation of a number of different operations] which was formerly the exclusive field of the men."

Lewis Lorwin, of the International Labour Office, and Abramson write in the January, 1936, number of the *Bulletin of the I.L.O.*:

"We have seen them at work not only at the kind of work they usually do in Western countries, but also on building jobs, with mobile cranes, various metallurgical operations, etc."

All these documents concern women working in the big centres—that is to say, the privileged ones. Who will ever tell us about the fate, reminiscent of the days of the slave-trader, of the 20,000 young women sent off to populate the depths of Siberia (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, May 13th, 1937). Twenty thousand women broken in to the rhythmic blows of pick and hammer by the cries of their hungry children, or washing pots to a litany of oaths from some drunken convict, or clearing forests laboriously under the pale and cold sky of limitless silence.

Or the fate of those frail old women living out a life without hope. After twenty-seven years of hard work, twenty of which were given to the Soviet Power, a working woman, too old to master the new machines, earns 120 roubles a month. Friedmann, who reports the case, adds: "I have met old women who after long years of service in the textile industry receive only 40 roubles a month pension" (Friedmann, p. 118).

During his visit to the Soviet Union, André Gide had an opportunity of seeing the diary of a Frenchwoman who had lived in Russia for thirty years. Its pages should be read and read again; a world weeps in their silence, a régime without common decency is summarized in them:

"Oh my darling, my darling, come closer; put your hand on my heart. . . . When I lifted the half-filled sack on my shoulder I don't know how I managed to remain upright. Even the women who had come to buy potatoes like me said I had a bad heart. Should I have come to Moscow after having lived for thirty long years in the provinces; should I have come to Moscow to wash out the dish-cloths of a family that flatters itself it is noble? I have washed out the dish-cloths of that family and I have come a long way carrying forty pounds of potatoes on my arm because my back would not stand the weight. Forty pounds! Perhaps that is nothing for a young peasant girl, or even for an old peasant if she is big and strong, but for a poor old woman like me! Oh how heavy it

was and how difficult to carry! You can believe me, my love, even in France, where I worked hard when I was young, I never had to carry such a burden. Once, once only, in Vladicaucase—it was at a time when potatoes were as scarce as they are now—food has been short now for such a long time—a lady gave me a basket of potatoes in exchange for my lessons. I hadn't to go as far as I did to-day and I was tired to death" (Herbart, p. 130).

Gide's correspondent was no doubt "a notorious Trotskyite," and unwilling to let the splendid work of the Pan-Russian Psycho-technical Congress inspire her. Listen to what it announced in the name of science in September, 1931:

"Women have the same capacity for labour and as much resistance as men. . . . The contrary opinion is a prejudice of petty-bourgeois chivalry."

Writing for a French public unlikely to be much impressed by psycho-technique, even of the pan-Russian variety, the pro-Stalinist Professor Jean Pons tries to find excuses:

"Certain French comrades are astonished at the sight of women at the work-bench. The Russian comrades are unable to understand this very petty-bourgeois objection. . . . In the Soviet Union labour is an honour. . . . Labour is voluntary. Women demand this work because it appears to them as the condition of their independence" (Pons, p. 189).

And, of course, Soviet women would consider honour unsatisfied unless they were physically wrecked, and a female Bolshevik would not compromise for anything less than heavy foundry work or felling trees.

"We all warmly welcome our candidate, Anna Semouchina, honoured female lumberjack. It is only in our great country that women enjoy absolute equality with men in all branches of labour. That is why we Soviet women express our profound gratitude to the Soviet Government and to the creator of the most democratic Constitution in the world, Comrade Stalin" (*Pravda*, January 18th, 1946).

But according to Pons one difficulty arises—namely, the hyperbolic praise showered by Stalin on the beauties of motherhood. How is the honour of voluntarily bearing a numerous family to be reconciled with the honour of working in the factories? And, even more, with the need to study and preserve the General Line? To judge from the following bitter reflections Soviet women have not succeeded in solving this difficult problem:

"Put the child in a crèche? That's all right if you only have one or two, but if a mother has seven children of varying ages of whom one must go to school, another to a kindergarten, a third to the crèche. . . . And the mother must think of fetching them in the evening, giving them their food, dressing and undressing them,

putting them to bed, nursing them—in fact, the woman can't go out to work any more; she would not have a minute to herself. What does that mean? That the woman must go back to washing up the dishes and the floors, that she is taken away from social life, from work, from study. . . . And on top of all that there is the eternal watchfulness over the spending of each kopeck" (*Russie et Chrétienté*, July-August, 1936).

The same regretful observations are to be found in the *Pravda* Nos. 156 and 164 of 1936, and the *Izvestia*, No. 133 of 1936.

Thus women in the Soviet Union are compelled to accept the classic reproach of intellectual inferiority—founded in fact, but an imposture when the causes are concealed—with the same impotent regrets and in the same way as their sisters in all other countries. None of the problems of the emancipation of women has been solved in the Soviet Union.

Pre-natal Leave

The new labour legislation introduced in the Soviet Union in the spring of 1938 reduced the total pregnancy leave to nine weeks as against four months previously. Despite this reduction, it is still a meritorious institution, but . . . "wages are so inadequate that many pregnant women beg permission to work during a part of their leave in order to double their pay in this period" (Marcel Yvon, *Révolution Proletarienne*, February 25th, 1936). And very often the wages of a pregnant woman are not paid out in full (*Izvestia*, No. 134 of 1936) and her old wages are not always paid to her when she returns to her work after confinement (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, No. 125 of 1936).

A collective letter from Moscow telephone girls published in the *Pravda*, No. 144 of 1936, exclaims:

"Ten roubles a month during suckling! But who wants to bear children for 10 roubles a month?"

Up to 1944 a Russian woman had to suffer the pains of confinement seven times, to lie wakeful at night seven years, to tremble by day seven years, to wash out dirty napkins seven times 365 times before she received the first family allowance from a grateful Government . . . of 2,000 roubles a year for five years. And then only on condition that the bureaucrats of the (adoptive) Father of the Peoples are able to find time and energy enough to attend to the matter:

"My wife has eight children and is expecting her ninth shortly. She has the right to a Government grant. I first took steps to obtain it on November 15th, 1936. We are now in 1938, but I haven't got it yet" (*Tikhookeanskaya Zverda*, June 16th, 1938).

A decree published on July 8th, 1944, established the "Order of Maternity" for mothers of more than ten children, and minor

grades of the Order for mothers of seven, eight and nine children, whilst State grants (still very small) were henceforth to begin with the third child instead of the seventh.

For the Russian working woman a confinement is not only a painful physical experience, but a difficult social problem. The brood usually living in the same room as the confined mother, the neighbours separated at the utmost by a thin partition, the noise and the dirt are not even the major inconveniences of her state. No working-class household possesses sufficient oil to boil the water, or the necessary changes of linen, the napkins, the baby clothes, the cotton wool, and so on. Such rarities are to be found only in specialist clinics.

"Go into the first chemists you come to and ask for the simplest of medicaments: boric acid, iodine, cotton wool. You will get the same answer each time: 'None in stock.' . . . A whole series of products, such as chloroform, have disappeared from production" (Kaminski, People's Commissar for Health, in the *Izvestia* on January 21st, 1935).

After the prohibition of abortion, the *Izvestia* of January 15th, 1937, reported that births had increased by 65 per cent., whilst the number of beds available in maternity clinics had been increased by 13 per cent. only.

Soviet mothers suffer not only from penury, but also from dirt, and the *Volgaya Kommuna* of April 5th, 1937, does not hesitate to employ such forthright expressions as "repulsive filth" and "an insanitary state" to describe "the room of the mother and child."

Many things to which Gorki would have devoted pages and pages even more indignant than those in *The Mother* if they had existed under Czarism are summarily dismissed in the Soviet Press with a few dry lines. A working woman taken suddenly in labour is turned away by the head of a maternity clinic because there is no room for her. She is refused an ambulance to take her to a second clinic "because ambulances have to be ordered in advance" (*Izvestia*, January 17th, 1937). Similar cases are reported in the *Uralski Rabotchi* of August 2nd and in the *Pravda* of July 3rd, 1938.

In the Soviet Union, as in all other countries, there are cases of working girls being dismissed by their superiors for pregnancy—for which those very superiors are sometimes responsible. And in many cases such dismissed girls are refused employment at one place after the other because their state threatens to prejudice labour productivity.

"The Press recently published an article stating . . . that there was a practice prevalent in many factories of insisting that women seeking employment must produce a doctor's certificate showing that they were not *enceinte*" (Citrine, p. 298).

One pregnant woman was turned out of two jobs in succession

"although she had begged and prayed them not to deprive her of her livelihood, and had promised not to ask for pay for the days she was unable to work" (*Trud*, November 2nd, 1935).

"How many difficult moments I had to experience as a consequence of my pregnancy," writes a nurse from Yalta in the Crimea. "The head doctor dismissed me. I have looked everywhere for work. No one will take me because I am in the fifth month and my condition is very obvious. . . . What shall I do? How shall I feed the child? I went to the union to get an authorization for an operation. They took pity on me and gave me 100 roubles" (*Izvestia*, No. 127 of 1936).

"We are all young mothers. The eldest amongst us is twenty-four years old. . . . The period of pregnancy was very hard for us. Natacha worked up until the last day, up to her confinement. Maria compressed her stomach to conceal the fact that she was pregnant. . . . We have no parents who could shelter us. . . . After long begging, and many sufferings, we received admission to a maternity home. It is not bad here. . . . But in five or six months we shall have to go. Where are we to go with our babies? It is very difficult to find work without qualifications, without living space, and with a child in arms. We have made the rounds of the factories, and everywhere we got the same answer: 'No room in the living quarters; we can't take you. . . .' Our comrade Kozlova almost got a job in a factory, but when they saw her papers with the note that she had a baby they said, 'Come to-morrow.' And when she went the next day they wouldn't take her. . . . It was with great difficulty that some of us managed to get work in a brick-field, but the work there is very hard for a mother who has to suckle her baby" (*Trud*, No. 127 of 1936).

A decree had to be issued on October 5th, 1936, making it a punishable offence to refuse to employ a woman on account of pregnancy, or to reduce her wages.

After the issue of this decree, Paul Pompilio, a delegate from Stalinist unions, came back from the Soviet Union enchanted because he had seen "in a boot and shoe factory . . . 1,800 women pregnant out of 2,000." The figures were doubtlessly exaggerated in order to flatter the new policy, but even if they were correct how much does this extraordinary spectacle of fertility prove? Pompilio asked himself the same question and replied to it in his own way: it proves that "a high level of life, ease and happiness exists to-day in the Soviet Union" (Pompilio, p. 46). By what is perhaps no more than a curious coincidence the same spectacle of prolific fertility could have charmed Pompilio at the same time in Poland, in Japan and in China, for instance, though the first axiom taught to students of demography is that the more poverty-stricken the country the higher the birth-rate. The only difference

between the Soviet Union and its rivals in respect of large families is that in the Soviet Union Stakhanovite mothers have also the privilege of being Stakhanovite workers.

"When Baby arrives . . ."

The Soviet Union is a land of milk and honey for the little man; and in particular it is the tender protector of mothers. So Communist propaganda would have the world believe. But when they are able to make themselves heard, Russian mothers themselves have a different story to tell:

"Many women who work as I do in the aviation industry procure an abortion or leave work if they become pregnant, for it is difficult to add the cares of looking after a baby to one's work. . . . It must not be forgotten that the extension of the network of crèches makes little difference; it will be a long time before there are enough for all the children" (*Pravda*, No. 164 of 1936).

The lies told about Soviet eugenics are so widespread that many people will be astonished to discover that the crèches are not free, but have to be paid for, and heavily. We ourselves gave way to the evidence only after many proofs.

One doctor hazarded the suggestion that "mothers of large families (more than seven children) should be freed from payments for the crèches and the kindergarten" (*Izvestia*, No. 129 of 1936). The same request was made by two other doctors "for the mothers of large families where there is no father" (*Izvestia*, No. 130 of 1936). "It is absolutely necessary that the prices paid for kindergarten should be reduced" wrote a group of female tram-conductors and a worker on the Metro in Moscow (*Izvestia*, Nos. 124 and 125 of 1936). A working mother of Dniepropetrovsk is more modest:

"I have six children and I am carrying a seventh. Two of my boys, schoolchildren, have been picked to go to a pioneer camp during their holidays, but I can't send them because the cost—80 roubles a month—is beyond my purse. The trade-union committee of the mine gives me no assistance whatever, but it would be fair if the mothers of large families could be given special prices for the maintenance of children in the camps, kindergarten and crèches" (*Trud*, No. 132 of 1936).

The evidence on this point is so abundant that one is flabbergasted at the success of Soviet propaganda in turning a fact which is so patent into its exact contrary. The worker Gretchko is asked to pay 300 roubles a month for three of his children at a pioneer camp, although he and his wife together earn 450 roubles a month. A working woman of Moscow sees her whole wages disappear merely in order to have three of her five children looked after. Another mother, a member of the Communist Youth Association,

pays 75 roubles a month to the crèche for her baby, and when she has to go out in the evening to attend a meeting she has to pay 3 roubles for a baby-minder. The peasant woman Ilina has to leave half a litre of milk at the crèche of the *kolkhoze* for each of her children when she is out in the fields at her work: "All right for mothers who have few children, but I have seven. Where am I to get so much milk?" (*Trud*, No. 130, *Pravda*, No. 150 of 1937, *Trud*, September 28th, 1936, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, August 11th, and *Izvestia*, No. 128 of 1935).

A legion of model tourists have spread a cloud of approving incense around one or two model crèches. The smell is good, but we are compelled to re-establish the original and more pervading atmosphere by telling the long litany of lamentations on the same subject. The following is an everyday scene in a Moscow district:

"I have to get up at five o'clock in the morning if I am to have time enough to feed the child, dress it and take it to the clinic before I go to work. The crèche is twenty minutes' walk away from the factory, and during the day I have to stay away from work for an hour and a half in order to suckle the child. One evening when I went to get the child I found it blue with cold, lying on a couch without any covering. I no longer take it to the crèche" (*Trud*, September 16th, 1935).

Let us take a quick voyage to various places in the vast territory of the Soviet Union. Here is a kindergarten in Turkestan:

"There are fifty children. Some of them are suffering from a contagious inflammation of the eyes, but they are not kept apart from the others. Everything is used in common: bowls, bibs and clothing. The children sleep, *as they do at home*, huddled on the floor on a strip of felt" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, November 4th, 1935).

And here is another at Sloutzk near Leningrad:

"Conditions at the kindergarten are intolerable; the windows are broken, the woodwork is worm-eaten, the roof is dilapidated. There are only forty pairs of sheets for 180 children, and there is no winter clothing and warm covering" (*Pravda*, September 22nd, 1935).

Another one at Kramatorsk, in the Don Basin:

"Mattresses, sheets and even beds are a luxury about which one hardly dares dream: 120 children sleep in bare wooden cots. . . . A third of the children are suffering from malaria. There are also cases of scabies and whooping cough, and a dozen of the children are isolated. The isolation room is a gloomy hole in the centre, with all the other rooms around" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, September 9th, 1935).

Let us return to Moscow in despair and knock on the door of the crèche of the Higher Training School. This is what awaits us:

"On the lower floor water runs down the walls. The children

play in a courtyard next to the drains. The unhygienic conditions cause a great number of infectious sicknesses. . . . The children are either left to their own resources or placed under the supervision of illiterate persons" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, No. 265 of 1938).

Incredible happenings in which individual drama mingles with bureaucratic burlesque are frequent. Sent around from one kindergarten to the other, children are often lost sight of, and the newspapers then print appeals from their mothers for assistance in finding their "strayed" children. The People's Commissar for Education, having no doubt first drawn up the Leninist balance of this extraordinary situation, did not hesitate to propose the introduction of a truly revolutionary measure, and the crèches were advised to make a list of the names of the children entrusted to their care, and to organize a central inquiry office (*Trud*, No. 129 of 1936, and the *Pravda*, June 8th, 1935).

Sir Walter (now Lord) Citrine has calculated that if all the crèches which exist on paper really do exist in reality, then they can take about 30 per cent. of the babies of working mothers (Citrine, p. 296). However, Henri Sellier argues that in Paris crèches are available to only one child in forty, but he does not mention the fact that half the women of Paris do not go out to work, and that nineteen out of twenty of those who do invariably give up their work when they become mothers and stay at home to look after their children, at least during the first year. The wages earned by their husbands are generally sufficient to permit them that petty-bourgeois fall from proletarian grace.

The decree of 1936, which promised to triple the number of places available in crèches and maternity homes as a compensation for the prohibition of voluntary abortion, seems to have suffered the fate of most publicity promises under the Soviet régime:

"The authorities of the local sections of the Public Health Services are passive and indifferent, and they have done nothing at all to implement the decision. The building of crèches and maternity homes is criminally backward compared with the plans. The plan for 1937 is not even on the way to preparation" (*Pravda*, June 8th, 1938).

The *Izvestia* of October 16th, 1938, quotes many cases in which funds allotted for the building of crèches have been used for other purposes, and crèche buildings taken by other institutions, or turned into dormitories for workers.

"The old authorities of the Commissariat of Agriculture, the wreckers, have completely neglected to make provision for the children in the *kolkhozes*" (*Izvestia*, October 16th, 1938).

Note in this respect the use of "self-criticism" to blacken men who have already been disgraced. Scandals in the Soviet Union are always "yesterday's scandals," never to-day's.

The Slavery of the Household

What should be done to persuade Soviet women to increase their families? The question might well have received the following sage answer from the lips of Stalin: "It is necessary that their negligence of the task of increasing the Soviet family should cease." Which would leave us still wondering. But fortunately a simple Russian working woman asked herself the same question—and in answering it she revealed the whole truth about conditions in Soviet Russia:

"Give us communal restaurants with good food at cheap prices. . . . Improve the crèches and the kindergarten, for really too little attention and care are paid to the little ones. . . . And we also need laundries to which a mother can give her things to wash and get them back again, not in a fortnight, but in two days, and find them clean. . . . Proper dresses for all ages and not dreadful sacks. . . . Shoes for children at low prices. . . . When we have got all that, we shall be able to think of enlarging our families" (*Pravda*, No. 147 of 1936).

The housing crisis is one of the cancers of Russian life. It is an insidious cancer with many spreading fibres; it attacks each artery, undermines each cell, putrifies each breath and gnaws at each hope. And, in particular, it affects the delicate female organism.

In a hut for workers a sheet separated two couples from the rest in a dormitory containing twenty-four beds. "I was about sick of this squalor," writes Sir Walter Citrine, who reports the case. And what effect must it have on such unfortunate couples themselves? No doubt the two women had dreamt, as all young women do, of escaping from the family room away from the squalling infants; dreamt of a lover above the common rout; dreamt of a nest as discreet as their love would be ardent. But witness their fate for ever: a small space bounded by a dirty sheet and a blank wall, filled with the smell of twenty-four pairs of dirty feet and within the range of twenty-four daily ribaldries. Oh yes, just one detail is lacking to complete their happiness: Stalin wants them to have children.

"It is very difficult to have children in the dormitories of the university," writes the student girl Obiedkava in the *Pravda*, No. 145 of 1936. "There are thousands of girls like me. Our two study grants, my husband's and mine, amount to 205 roubles. Neither he nor I has a room" (*Izvestia*, No. 124 of 1936). "Have children when husband and wife earn nothing but their study grants and live in different dormitories in different parts of the town!" (*Pravda*, No. 154 of 1936). "I am in love with a man who hasn't a room," writes a Moscow working girl. "I live on the

floor of my parents' room. Have I the right to be a mother?" (*Trud*, No. 124 of 1936). "The trade union and Komsomol organizations don't bother about the conditions under which we have to live. Most of our girls live outside the town. They hire beds (plank beds let out in communal rooms). Tonia is pregnant and lives, without her husband, in a hut. She will have her baby in a few days, and where will she be able to go with it?" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, No. 123 of 1936).

Stalin does not lack philosopher toadies to demonstrate that the lodgment of workers in huts proves the fidelity of the Soviet Government to the collectivist spirit—a taste for intimacy being decadent and degenerate—but in describing the dormitory of the "Stankolite" Works in a Moscow suburb, the editor of the *Pravda* (April 4th, 1937) had to forget that hypocrisy:

"Most of the workers live in 'provisional' wooden huts put up in 1929. They are dilapidated and their roofs are falling in. Six families occupy a room about eighteen square yards in area. The walls and the floor are covered with a layer of dirt. Men and women live in a frightful state of promiscuity which constantly causes scandals and trouble."

The independence of husbands and wives, much vaunted by the Bolsheviks as a favourable consequence of female emancipation, is denied as soon as it interferes with the free play of the political terror system. Once the husband, the ex-husband, the fiancé, or the boy friend of a few days, is accused of a Right or Left deviation the woman is immediately declared an accessory and made to do penance for her offence and denounce him to the G.P.U.

Mme. Mariottini joined the Italian Communist Party in 1919, and emigrated to the Soviet Union during the wave of terror which followed the assassination of Matteotti in 1925. In 1930 she was rebuked for not having informed the G.P.U. about a meeting in which her husband took part. A year later her husband was forced to flee from the Soviet Union to escape the clutches of the G.P.U. Mme. Mariottini was expecting a baby and was therefore unable to go with him. The "progressive" authorities of the Soviet Union then placed her in the dilemma of signing a public declaration condemning her husband and breaking off all relations with him, or starving. She refused to sign. In consequence, she was dismissed from her work and deprived of her bread card:

"As a person expelled from the party, no one has the courage to employ me. . . . I have been without a bread card for more than a month. See what comes in the end of all the phrases about the protection of working women! They are threatening to turn the child out of the crèche. We are now faced with starvation. And you must say nothing because that would only make things still worse" (letter of December 26th, 1933).

After five months without work of any kind, she found a job at 70 roubles a month, but the crèche demanded 80 roubles for looking after the child. So she worked at night as well.

"I found work by chance. . . . It consists of machine sewing, 700 pieces about 14 inches long. . . . It is clear that I must work at home as well. After seven hours at the sewing machine, I must work four or five hours at home on the typewriter . . . then wash, attend to the child's things. After my work I am so exhausted that I can turn my mind to nothing whatever. It is a life for an animal, not a human being. Work, work, work, all for a crust of bread."

The will of the beloved Father of the Peoples was accomplished: the child died of privation and the mother remained alive to weep for her blighted hopes and her lost health.

Millions of "liberated" women live just like that in the Soviet Union.

They are not even liberated from the kitchen sink and the wash-tub as Lenin hoped. A bath is amongst the rarer social institutions in the Soviet Union. When they exist they are dirty and have no hot-water supply (*Vetchernaya Moskva*, February 1st and March 21st, 1938). Kaganovitch reports that baths, showers and so on are in a perpetual state of being about to be constructed. "Speeches are delivered on the importance of baths, showers and washing places in general, but that is all" (Kaganovitch, p. 63).

Leninism is of no help at all in attending to hygienic intimacies. The intimate attentions so frequently necessary in periods of pregnancy raise a complicated problem for the mother-to-be returned from the factory—as complicated as those she has just left behind her. Herbart declares that in order to wash herself she must get a friend or a relative to stand guard on the door of her room. Children's clothes and napkins are hung up everywhere. But perhaps she can send her washing to a municipal laundry?

"The work of our laundries is inadequate. The washing is being constantly mixed up. The things are washed in a terrible fashion and the ironing is even worse. Garments are frequently torn, and often lost. It takes from twenty to thirty days to get anything back from the laundry. . . . The mechanized communal laundries of Moscow take only the washing of big institutions and enterprises. The private laundry of individual citizens is accepted unwillingly, and customers have to queue up for about two hours to hand it in. . . . Damaged items are the scourge of all laundries. The washing is torn because the machinery is in a bad state of repair" (*Pravda*, March 5th, 1937).

Now let us imagine that despite her aching back, the dirty lavatories and the mutilated washing the working woman leaves the smell of the dormitory and the frying-pan (usually without a handle) behind her and goes out in high hope with her husband to

have a meal in a State restaurant. Let us accompany them via an account published in the *Izvestia* of March 6th, 1937:

"Broken windows and dilapidated doors at the 'Kitchen Factory' of the Boudennougol Trust. . . . In order to get there, we must pass through a passage in which a bootmaker is at work. . . . All the woodwork has been torn away to serve as fuel. . . . The kitchen provides a maximum of 200 meals a day, and that is for 3,800 workers. . . . The menu is always the same: millet soup and chopped meat. . . . The directors of the Domarpit Trust, which embraces the whole network of restaurants in the Don Basin, count as a meal two glasses of cloudy cold tea. Frauds like that are typical of the criminal activity of the Trust, whose directors have ruined the work of socialized feeding in the Don Basin. . . . In 1936 they closed 450 restaurants out of 860."

Thus, no matter where she turns the Russian woman, builder of Socialist industry, finds herself relieved of none of her age-old obligations: looking after her children, preparing her family's meals, washing their clothes, and generally running her household.

And the permanence of her servitude has not failed to raise echoes of the age-old domination of the man. Let us conclude this chapter with an extract from the *Pravda* of June 7th, 1935, containing the following significant admission:

"In principle, women in the Soviet Union possess exactly the same rights as men without any restriction. But that is exploited in order to dispense with all obligations towards women, and under a cloak of comradeship brutality and cynicism prevail. The lack of consideration for women is the essence of all the problems with which we are struggling."

THE CHILD AND THE SCHOOL

IT IS NO ACCIDENT that Soviet propaganda boasts in particular of the reforms from which women and children allegedly benefit in the Soviet Union. From the day when civilization decided that society was there for the development of man and not man there to be immolated for the benefit of society, all progress was measured by the degree of protection accorded to the individual. The weakest in society require the greatest degree of care and attention, and the strong and able-bodied felt ill at ease if they saw a sick man dying without care and attention. The adult shivered when the child was cold. And who is responsible for the education of the child if not the man? Socialism accepted and systematized these principles of human solidarity, comparing the weak and disinherited proletariat with the child in society. Having dispossessed the proletariat, Stalin owed it to himself to deprive the child of aid.

Social Inequality in the Cradle

We have already mentioned the insolence with which privilege asserts itself at the two extreme ages of human life, and we have made the acquaintance of the nursemaids of the rich, their governesses, their foreign-language teachers and their kindergarten. There are schools in which the pupils, recruited from military families, are prepared for the officers corps from the very earliest age. The youthful inmates of the Suvarov Cadet School are invested with exceptional social privileges. Certain "Pioneers Palaces" are run with almost Oriental luxury. The one in Leningrad is housed in the Anitchkov Palace, the former residence of Alexander III. The fact that such former royal palaces are now put to other uses is regarded by some as an incontestable and heartening sign of a democratic revolution. But Krupskaya, the widow of Lenin, has brought the matter back to its right proportions by pointing out that only the children of the new privileged have the chance of entering such places, whilst the great mass of children continue to follow their age-old destiny: running the streets neglected. The former diplomat Barmine tells us what high influences he had to bring to bear in order to secure entry for his two sons into one of these gilded schools. The *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, No. 97 of 1938, gives us the following picture:

"At the gates of the palace there are crowds of children gazing eagerly through the bars. They remain obstinately watching with

sombre gaze those, provided with an entrance ticket, who cross the threshold."

The same newspaper describes how the disinherited revenge themselves by hurling insults at the fortunate ones: "Only favourites get tickets. We don't want your palace," they cried, and suddenly they all fled. The final touch which shows which side of the barricade the policeman is on—and what sort of a dictatorship it is. And on the other hand, "pride of caste increases amongst the pupils of the palace, and disdain for their less fortunate comrades" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, No. 285 of 1938).

During the holidays the social inequalities amongst the children of the Soviet Union continue unabated. The children of the workers squabble in dirty camps around noisome stew; the children of the privileged caste disport themselves on grass surrounded with flowers in model camps such as that at Artek in the Crimea. Gustave Mequet was greatly struck by the difference in the treatment accorded to different groups of Soviet children: some were "clean and well cared for, with round, bonny cheeks," whilst others, more numerous, were "badly dressed and emaciated, begging for bread" (Mequet, p. 121). Between these two extremes the middle class in the Soviet Union has its own special bone reserved for it:

"The children of Stakhanovites are sent to kindergarten and crèches without payment. Supplementary schools are organized for them" (*l'Humanité*, December 25th, 1935).

Let us now take a look at the fate of little Ivan Ivanovitch, the sort of Soviet boy who swarms everywhere and yet occupies so little space in Soviet affairs.

Those Who still have Mothers

Pioneer camps, schools, kindergarten and similar institutions are enumerated in an imposing list for our benefit. A tenth of these various pompous denominations represent really model institutions, another tenth cover vague arrangements, hutments, back yards and so on, whilst the remaining four-fifths are mere airy projects.

"Hidden enemies publish figures purporting to show that hundreds of thousands of children are looked after by various institutions of this sort, but the figures are seen to be lying and exaggerated tenfold" (*Dokholnoi Vospitanie*, March, 1938, in an article signed "Zorina").

"Liberty, equality, fraternity"—our French Communists are fond of mocking at the words: "Those grand words you inscribe on the front of your public buildings have no reference to what goes on inside." But what shall we say about those schools which offer "the happiest youth in the world" dirt, brutality and humiliation?

"The children's homes are amongst the most neglected institutions. The usual picture is made up of unhygienic conditions, bad food, unkindness and often ill-treatment. . . . Theft and hooligan morals prevail. . . . In this school the director is systematically drunk and ill treats the children. . . . In that one he surrounds himself with drunkards and swindlers. The place is overcrowded, bitterly cold and dirty, and at nights often without light" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, No. 83 of 1938).

The *Bulletin of the Dominican Centre for the Study of Russian Affairs* quotes the following depressing admissions:

"The thirty-eight children's homes in the Saratov Region are in a very bad state. . . . At Petrovsk the children have to learn standing up. . . . Last year fifty-one directors were dismissed. . . . Good-for-nothing and morally inferior people have got into these institutions and the result is juvenile depravity and drunkenness. The children are beaten. . . . Most of the teachers are illiterate" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Nos. 33 and 41 of 1938).

These plain and straightforward documents show Stalin's teachers to be the worthy successors of the ignorant, drunken, bearded and verminous priests who ran the Russian schools in the time of Dostoevsky.

Pioneers! Soviet propagandists have a flair for stirring titles, and they have given their children this name so evocative of open spaces, simple joys and healthy progress. Pioneers! Let us see their real fate.

"In a Pioneers' camp near Moscow there is no medical attention. . . . A child with a very deep cut in his foot had to go without iodine or any sort of bandage; there was nothing of the sort in the whole camp. . . . On July 2nd maggots were found in the meat and in the cabbage. The soup served at lunch is often sour. . . . The children are bored and ask to be allowed to go home" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, July 5th, 1937).

The G.P.U. can control everything, but not boredom. Apart from misery, boredom is the closest companion of the Russian under the Soviet régime. When the Soviet child leaves its bed-bugs it meets with Marxist-Leninism. The young privileged caste, who get the latest slogans drilled into them in the form of games, are no less bored. Why aren't their balls decorated with cheerful colours in the old-fashioned way, instead of always with a picture of Stalin?

"There are several hundred pupils in this school. Why are there so few Pioneers amongst them? It is because the Pioneer Group does not attract the children. They find political work tiresome and boring. . . . And thus the children are cast back into the arms of the worst elements of the streets" (*Pravda*, April 13th, 1935).

Between meetings there is practical work of a specifically educational character "to bind the child to society":

"At the Krasnoufisk Camp the children, by way of recreation and distraction, have 'to fight for cleanliness' at the railway station, clean the platform covered with expectorations, and combat passengers travelling without tickets" (*Pravda*, April 13th, 1935).

Destined to build up a new world, the Pioneers find themselves cleaning up the expectorations of the old.

Medical Assistance and Its By-ways

Lack of space, lack of peace and quiet, lack of hygiene, lack of medical attention and lack of medicaments, even the simplest, make it impossible to treat any serious illness in the home. Parents of a sick child must brave all the involved bureaucratic discouragements involved and strive to get it accepted in a hospital. *Trud* of August 5th, 1938, tells of long and often vain efforts to get little children into a sanatorium for tubercular patients.

In 1936 Kaminski, People's Commissar for Health, announced that there were 6.3 beds for every 1,000 children as against 7.4 in 1913. The *Izvestia* of February 6th and 28th, 1936, reckoned that 5,000 rachitic children in Moscow had not been able to secure hospital attention, as there were in all only sixty-five beds available for them. According to the same newspaper the number of sick children deprived of proper medical attention throughout the Soviet Union was about 300,000.

And if parents do succeed in getting their children into a hospital the problem arises of keeping them there, for hospital directors are interested only in getting rid of them (*Pravda*, September 30th, 1935). One medical man perfected an ingenious method: he accused the little consumptives of being quarrelsome and lazy, "future good-for-nothings and drunkards" (*Izvestia*, August 15th, 1935).

The sanatorium for tubercular children near Orechovo-Sonev is situated on the edge of a great marsh:

"Twenty children contracted malaria during the year. . . . There are twice as many patients as provided for. . . . Very often the electricity is out of order and the children have to pass the whole evening in darkness. . . . There is only one doctor for every 120 children" (*Moskovski Bolshevik*, July 4th, 1939).

Hungry Children

Hunger strikes the child harder than the adult, and the First Five-Year Plan was carried out on the dispossession of the peasants and the slaughter of the innocents. We propose to quote a long and poignant story told by Solonievitch after his escape from captivity in a forced labour camp on the White Sea:

"Every morning, before the prisoners went off to their work, the children of the so-called free population were accustomed to assemble around the hutments to beg for food; a pitiable troop of

little beings in rags who sobbed and begged for the remains of our meal.

"One evening I was going to empty and clean out the pan which contained the remnants of our borsch (a soup made with rotten cabbage and herring heads), a compact block solidified by the cold, when a little girl of about ten, terribly thin and dressed in rags, rushed up to me crying:

" 'Little father! Little father! There may be something left. Give it to me.'

"Hunger had made her eyes unnaturally bright.

" 'But there's only ice in it.'

" 'Ice borsch. Give it to me all the same.'

"There was such fear in her voice that I might refuse her the dreadful present, and I was so exhausted by overwork, that without thinking much of what I did, I let her get hold of the pan. She pulled aside her rags and for a moment I saw her naked young body and her jutting ribs. The rags closed again round the pan and the little body trembled with cold. Exhausted, I stood there for a moment or two without moving. The gesture of the little girl had been that of a mother protecting her child. . . . And then I understood. The unfortunate child was thawing the noisome food with the warmth of her own body. Then suddenly I jumped towards her, picked her up in my arms and ran with her to my hut. She struggled to free herself, crying:

" 'Let me eat. Let me eat.'

"I don't think I ever trembled so much as when I rummaged on my shelf for a scrap of bread. With a hysterical cry, the child snatched at the poor piece I found for her and stuffed it into her mouth with both hands. The tears streamed down her bluish face. . . .

"The children, our future. . . . It is on little skeletons, millions of little skeletons, that the Bolsheviks are building up their Socialist paradise. But even if they succeed I don't want a paradise at that price" (Solonievitch, pp. 116-18).

The Intourist takes good care that its conducted parties do not see the White Sea Canal camps, and therefore the Stalinists find a ready echo amongst numerous friends of the Soviet Union when they ironically denounce the alleged extravagance of Solonievitch and others who describe such experiences. And yet it is confirmed to-day, confirmed by the Soviet Government itself, that in the years 1932-4, the period described by Solonievitch, there was a famine in the Soviet Union which resulted in the deaths of several million people. Do the sceptical friends of the Soviet Union imagine that starving children retired modestly into a corner out of everyone's way in order to await patiently the final call into the next world? And when cases of cannibalism are reported, some of them

ask indignantly, between the fruit and the cheese, whether such things can "really" be true, only to deplore, over coffee and brandy, that polemics can lead to such extravagance and excess. And yet in their own home town men kill their fellow men, not to save their lives, but to live without working. And in some quiet corner of a pleasant wood a sadist violates and kills for a few moments' physical pleasure. And yet, in a country groaning under the lash of hunger, where starvelings suddenly drop dead amidst their hungry fellows, they find it impossible to believe that a human being can be so much in love with life, so savagely and intensely in love with life, as to snatch food from a wretched convict!

It is an old and well-established custom to sacrifice human beings to a cause. We are more moved at news of a hunger-strike than at news of a famine. And if famine news does move us, it is only to the extent it dramatizes a political epic, and not because it individualizes a social drama. It is asking too much of imaginations saturated with suffering to represent concretely the hunger of a whole people, to imagine a pair of lovers tearing each other to pieces over a crust of bread, to hear a Newton begging for a scrap of food, to imagine the violet patches on the body of a child, to see its mother staunch a tear too weak to fall with the long wisps of her dirty hair.

It was in 1933. Climatic conditions were exceptionally favourable. . . .

Vagrant Children

The receding waves of Revolution, Civil War, foreign war and famine left behind ragged groups of human beings more helpless and pitiful than all others in odd corners of the towns and at junctions on the roads: the *bezprizorny*, the vagrant children, swept away from their past by one wave, robbed of their future by another. Worthy people dismissed the calamity with the sage observation that no omelettes can be made without breaking eggs, and it has been demonstrated by the finest spirits, and admitted by the wisdom of centuries, that history is a great storm and mankind a handful of dust. Then many speeches were made, plans drawn up, homes built and a great film screened: *The Road to Life*. By 1929 the situation was a little better. The former children had disappeared, willy-nilly, by dying or growing up.

But in the years from 1932 to 1937 travellers, Rudolf, Herbart, Smith, Delbos, Citrine, Legay, Lang, Friedmann, Yvon, Mercier, and many others, still saw little hands stretched out at street corners. How had it come about? The Five-Year Plan with its processions of triumphs had passed that way: "dekulakization," deportations and famine. And the dust-bins, the debris of the market place, the crumbs from restaurant tables, the corn-bins of the State,

the pockets of late walkers once again felt the feverish scrabbling of innumerable little fingers.

For abandoned sucklings there are collecting centres and reception places:

"Eighty to ninety a month are taken in by the reception centre of a small town. The babies are brought in by militiamen who have found them in railway stations, in tunnels, on landings. . . . About 20 per cent. of them die. It is not always poverty, famine or the lack of a shelter which brings parents to commit this crime: perhaps the mother and father have quarrelled and decided to separate, and then with fantastic impudence they take the baby to a militia post. Or perhaps the grandmother with whom the baby has been abandoned leaves it on the doorstep of the reception centre, and then, regretting the shawl wrapped around it, comes back to claim it" (*Pravda*, May 10th, 1935).

The *bezprizorny* scourge would not be complete unless it were aggravated by bureaucratic muddle. Sometimes children with homes and families are picked up during *bezprizorny* raids and sent off to "the distribution centre." Their parents never find them again. A court process revealed the fact that no lists were kept of abandoned children picked up by the police. Sent in batches from place to place, they are soon lost (*Izvestia*, September 20th and 21st, 1935, and the *Pravda* of July 25th and September 20th, 1935). When a child becomes an orphan in a *kolkhoze* he is given a certificate to the effect that he is "homeless" and entitled to a place in a reception home. The poor little wretch then goes off with his few possessions to find a reception home; the certificate serves him as a passport and the doctrines of Marxist-Leninism as a guide. One out of three such children fall in with troops of *bezprizorny* and are lost (*Pravda*, September 9th, 1934).

A decree issued by the Council of People's Commissars and published in the *Pravda* of June 2nd, 1936, puts the blame for the presence of abandoned children in the towns on to the bad functioning of local institutions. It is the same old story: "self-criticism" exercised by the higher-ups at the expense of their subordinates, the dissipation of the responsibility of the régime over a host of minor individual causes. The negligent authorities are then invited to be severe and to clear up the big towns. The only result of the pitiless removal of the *bezprizorny* from the big centres is to aggravate their misery and precipitate them towards their natural end, their common destiny: banditry and highway robbery.

The Hooligans

"Sufferings of all kinds . . . have given us such bad morals. Instead of civilizing us, our masters have turned us into barbarians because they are barbarians themselves" (Babeuf).

The words "*bezprizorny*" and "hooligan" have gradually become more or less synonymous in the Soviet Union. The cases of juvenile banditry are increasingly reported in the Press, and the details are horrifyingly monotonous. Four boys commit burglary. Eleven bands are identified as being in operation in a single day. In Grozny a group of backsliders whose ages ranged from twelve to sixteen were responsible for nineteen bad cases within the space of a few months. Two girls aged respectively twelve and fifteen break into and rob a house. Another girl of fourteen robs a drunken man she has enticed into a dark corner. Four boys and girls aged from thirteen to fourteen are caught *in flagranti* picking pockets around kiosks. A little girl of twelve has a record of ten audacious robberies. In two weeks in one Moscow district the court dealt with sixty cases of juvenile crime. Two boys aged twelve and sixteen respectively were found to have committed several murders. Certain districts in Turkestan and Eastern Siberia are terrorized by bands of hooligans (*Pravda*, June 10th and April 19th, 1935, and May 9th, 1937; *Izvestia*, May 14th and 29th, 1935, March 2nd, 1937; *Pravda Vostochna*, April 14th, 1938; *Sovetskaya Sibir*, May 18th, 1938).

What is flabbergasting, if one still has any capacity for indignation at the cynicism of Soviet propaganda, is to observe the latter waxing virtuously horrified at the existence of gangsterism in the capitalist United States.

It is profoundly significant that this "hooliganism" is not confined to the *bezprizorny*, but frequently involves the Soviet schools:

"Schoolchildren, badly supervised, play with *bezprizorny* and pass rapidly from sheer mischievousness to theft, robbery and other crimes" (*Pravda*, February 28th, 1935).

"The absence of educational work in the schools ruins discipline. Hooligan morals are becoming more and more common in the streets. Every day the militia have to pick up three or four school-children for grave offences against public order. . . . The pupils . . . [a list of names follows] robbed the till of a shop. They were arrested in a restaurant in possession of false keys and jemmies. Teachers pay so little attention to the conduct of their pupils that they are completely out of control even in the schools themselves. At School No. 7, under the eyes of the Headmaster, the little hooligans do abominable things, destroy the furniture, take home things which belong to the school, and so on" (*Za Kommunisticheskaya Prosveshchennye*, January 4th, 1937).

Another symptom of the degeneration of the Soviet régime is the absence of the efforts made under the N.E.P. to reclaim and re-educate the new legion of "lost souls."

"There are many hooligans around, and the schools have only one remedy for the trouble: expulsion. Three boys were expelled, with the result that they became worse than ever. . . . They were

brought to trial and sentenced to a reformatory school" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, December 14th, 1938).

And the Soviet Government now announces frankly:

"The imprisonment of the little wrongdoers is an indispensable means of the struggle against criminality" (*Izvestia*, May 19th, 1935).

This return to the old and easy police method of locking up offenders meets with the approval of the population. To abandon their children is an understandable reaction of families subject to deportation. Juvenile delinquency developing into banditry is the natural upshot of abandonment. The poor possessions, usually unprotected, of ordinary people are the natural booty of these young bandits. And the spontaneous reaction of the unfortunates who lose their possessions is to hate the unfortunates who stole them. Once again we are faced with one of those vicious circles we have so often met during the course of this book; they begin in misery and go on to cruelty, which in its turn engenders still more misery, and they are riveted around the régime like iron bands of infamy.

The Soviet School in Soviet Propaganda

Soviet propagandists have loudly proclaimed to the whole world again and again that the Soviet régime has done more for the development of the educational system than was ever done before. Let us take a look at the official figures taken from the *Socialisticheskoj Stroitel'stvo S.S.S.R.* of 1935, the *Narodzhestvoistvenny Plan na 1935 goda* and the *Moscow Statistical Annual*.

Year	Primary and Secondary Number of Pupils schools	
1914-15 ¹	106,400	7,800,000
1928-9	124,429	12,075,000
1929-30	132,656	13,504,000
1930-1	152,654	17,656,000
1931-2	167,262	20,846,000
1932-3	167,254	21,813,000
1933-4	166,737	22,003,000
1934-5 (plan)	167,280	24,036,000
1935-6 (plan)	171,580	27,900,000
1936 (actual)	166,200	25,500,000

In France, for instance, there are approximately 6,000,000 pupils in public and private, elementary and secondary schools. By comparison with the respective populations of France and the Soviet Union, the proportions are roughly similar. However, the

¹ Neither the number of schools nor the number of pupils includes private schools.

proportion of children in the population as a whole is much greater in the Soviet Union than in France. As far as the tempo of growth is concerned, one can compare the doubling of the total of pupils in Russia between 1928 and 1938 with the doubling of the total which took place in France between 1900 and 1914. The rate of progress was even greater in Czarist Russia if private schools are taken into account, which they are not in Soviet statistics. We then find that in fourteen years, from 1900 to 1914, the number of pupils increased from 2.5 millions to 9 millions. The increase in the number of schools in the same period was 150 per cent., whilst in the last decade of the Stalinist era it was only 40 per cent. Progress in these matters, more or less rapid according to the point of departure, is a necessity imposed on all modern countries and it incites the emulation of all régimes no matter what their political colour. The merit due to any particular government in this respect can be measured only by the quality of the education given and the general state of educational facilities: the comfort and efficiency of the schools, the industry of the pupils, their success at examinations and, in general, the level of culture they achieve. It is against such criteria that the efforts of the Soviet régime must be judged.

School Buildings in the Soviet Union

The note which begins, ends and dominates the whole concert of Soviet desolation is dilapidation and dirt. Official figures issued on the highest level admit that the number of school buildings remains considerably behind the number of pupils requiring accommodation; the former increased by 40 per cent. between 1928 and 1938, whilst the latter increased by 100 per cent. In France, where the building of school premises is certainly too slow, there are 82,000 schools for 6,000,000 pupils, or an average of seventy-three pupils per school, whilst in the Soviet Union the figure given is 165,000 schools for 25,000,000 pupils, or 151 per school. Even so, to judge from an article in the *Outchitelskaya Gazeta* of November 1st, 1938, which gives much more modest figures, Russian statistics would appear to have been rolling merrily "along Socialist rails" again.

As far as "passing and surpassing" the achievements of capitalist countries is concerned, the Soviet educational authorities seem to have taken a leaf out of Rabelais' book: "I baptize thee carp," declared the monk to the rabbit he consumed on Good Friday. Rabelais' monk was modest enough to transform a superior gastro-nomic reality into an inferior aquatic fiction. Soviet procedure is the contrary: the educational authorities take walls and baptize them schools.

"The Commissar for Education counts premises which have been in course of construction for years as schools. . . . Building

began in a village in the neighbourhood of Odessa in 1935: 215,000 roubles have been expended and 4,000 working days of the *kolkhoze*, but three years have passed and the school is still not ready. . . . Another school has been under construction for eight years, another one for six years . . ." (*Izvestia*, No. 92 of 1938).

The most difficult thing is not to make projects, but to obtain the materials and co-ordinate their use:

"Timber which had been lying in water for three years was delivered for beams. . . . Disorganization is complete. . . . Material is sent off to places where no schools are being built" (*Outchitskaya Gazieta*, No. 19 of 1938).

Soviet statistics are tossed about like a ball in a game, and Professor Rougier has gone to a great deal of trouble to keep his eye on the ball as it darts from place to place:

"When I asked Comrade Epstein, Vice-Commissar at the Narkompros, concerning the number of primary and secondary schools in the Soviet Union, he told me that there were 80,000, which is not very many. As the director of the Technical Training School at Leningrad had told me there were 350,000, I thought it as well to see if I could reconcile these two figures, so I turned to . . . Gosisdats, the publishing house of the Soviet Government. Comrade Loupol then gave me a third figure, that of 250,000. When I remarked on the differences between these three figures my informant answered calmly: 'Owing to the shortage of premises, there are three relays of children in each building. Thus the same school can be counted either as one or three with equal justification' " (Rougier, p. 35).

Here we have, in fact, the most striking result of the extreme shortage of school premises. In 90 per cent. of the elementary schools three classes are taken successively, and each class occupies the premises for not more than three hours. This unexpected application of the industrial shift system to education applies also to 70 per cent. of the secondary schools. Each pupil attends school only for about half the time usual in other countries. It is not difficult to imagine how much attention and teaching the children of the third shift get:

"The children get back from school between nine and ten o'clock in the evening. Everyone is at home—father, mother, sisters and brothers. And then it begins. . . . Noise, quarrels, abuse. . . . And that goes on until bedtime" (*Pravda*, January 13th, 1935).

The Soviet Government announces loudly how many children have their names on the school registers, and then complains rather less loudly of the number who do not attend school:

"In the Gorki Region alone 5,934 pupils left the schools during the course of 1935-6, 2,362 in the second year and 3,012 in the third. Actually, over 5,000 children no longer attend school at

all" (*Pravda*, December 26th, 1936). "In the Krasnoyarsk District of Eastern Siberia alone, more than 9,000 children of school age do not go to school. . . . Some children have a journey of many miles to go to school" (*Outchitelskaya Gazieta*, January 3rd, 1938). "Many children do not attend school in winter owing to the lack of proper footwear" (*Za Kommunisticheskoi Prosveshchennie*, December 8th, 1935).

That sort of thing was to be expected, for everything is interdependent in the modern world. If children are to be taught there must be schools to teach them in, and if they are to go to school there must be transport to take them there, and if there is to be transport over long distances there must be rails for it to run on—and not "Socialist rails" either. In winter, always severe in Russia, the children must have warm clothes and good boots. But the Five-Year Plan has other fish to fry. In those Soviet schools which really do exist the most obvious feature as soon as you cross the threshold is invariably "dirt, unhygienic conditions and a sordid appearance" (*Pravda*, February 28th, 1935). A circular of March 10th (*Bulletin of the People's Commissariat of Education*, No. 12, April 20th, 1935, Article No. 210) names a series of schools whose revolutionary achievements are enumerated as follows:

1. Lack of heating. The children keep their coats on when they have coats. During periods of extreme cold the schools close altogether.

2. No tables and chairs, or forms. The children sit on the floor.

3. No blackboards. The teacher writes on the wall or not at all.

4. Schools situated in the same buildings as workers' dormitories. Floors of beaten earth.

5. Windows broken, taps frozen, etc.

Since 1935 the situation has hardly improved.

"In Kirghizia hundreds of schools are housed in unsuitable premises. They are miserable hovels with low ceilings and tiny windows. . . . At the school in Ady the children sit on the floor. Their teachers have no chairs, no tables and no blackboards. Even in the capital of the district the children of the middle school follow their lessons crouched on the floor of beaten earth. . . . Window panes broken, bare walls, dilapidation, dirt, spiders' webs—that is the general picture of schools in the country districts" (*Outchitelskaya Gazieta*, October 13th and 21st, 1938).

One of the most important of Marxist theories is that the ideological superstructure of any society is conditioned by its economic infrastructure. Even if the links which join the one to the other have often been fastened in a slap-dash fashion by the Bolsheviks, common sense must surely admit that no culture can exist without paper, without ink, without pens, without books and without a commercial network to provide them. That simple reflection would

be sufficient to reduce the problem of Soviet education to its real level were it not an understood thing that ordinary logic must fall silent the moment Stalin appears, and were it not that so many wretched sophisms had confused so many well-meaning people. Let us turn to the source of "self-criticism" again:

"We have made the rounds of the ten shops in Leningrad which sell school books, and in not one of them could we find any" (*Outchitelskaya Gazieta*, No. 125 of 1938).

"A lack not only of school furniture, but of school books, exercise books, pencils, pens, ink and chalk is reported even in the model schools" (*Bulletin of the People's Commissariat of Education*, No. 12 of 1935, Article No. 211).

When a schoolchild in Western Europe puts the blame on his scratchy pen, his father sees through the excuse at once and diagnoses laziness—and punishment is in the offing. In the Soviet Union he diagnoses "Five-Year Plan"—and says no more. Out of 16,000,000 exercise books supposed to be produced by the Kamensk Factory only 150,000 were usable (Basily, p. 244). The paper of these exercise books is like blotting paper and it is impossible to write with ink. Soviet publications (*Za Industrialisatziu* of September 15th, 1935, *Za Kommunisticheskoi Prosveschennie* of December 10th, 1936, the *Izvestia* of February 3rd, 1936, and the *Pravda* of December 12th, 1935) all agree that pencils break as soon as any attempt is made to sharpen them, and that pens won't hold ink and merely tear the paper, which, one may reasonably assume, is of very poor quality. The *Pravda* of January 11th, 1937, declares that hundreds of districts in the Ukraine have no exercise books at all. The *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of August 9th, 1936, calculates that each schoolchild in the Soviet Union is provided on an average with half a nib a year. Trotsky calculated that in 1935 the United States consumed eight times as much paper per head of the population as the Soviet Union in the same year (Trotsky, VI).

"We are short of millions of textbooks. We are short of 20,000 teachers" (*Outchitelskaya Gazieta*, No. 126 of 1938). "Taking the most optimistic estimate, of the 90 million books necessary not more than 55 million are likely to be provided. There are very few maps on sale, and no historical material whatever. It is absolutely impossible to find a cut-out alphabet, a simple spelling manual or anything of that sort" (*Za Kommunisticheskoi Prosveschennie*, August 25th, 1937).

A teacher from Odessa writes: "There are perhaps two or three physics manuals per class, and for literature the situation is even worse" (*ibid.*, September 6th, 1937).

It is obviously less important for Stalinism to teach the children to count than it is to get their parents out of the habit of thinking for themselves, hence the wise disproportion between the number of

school books available and the vast number of propaganda pamphlets. In one respect, however, the two have something in common:

"The textbook of physical geography published by the Geographical Institute of the Academy of Science for the use of schools contains no less than 500 gross errors" (*Izvestia*, May 23rd, 1938).

The exercises most recommended in all branches of the curriculum are the invention of slogans, theses and placards in connection with the hundred and one historic congresses which go to make up the Soviet calendar. But . . .

"Young Soviet citizens turn away from the rich and varied material on the tramways, the State loans, the road transport system. . . . They sigh for adventure stories" (speech of Marchak reported in the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, January 22nd, 1936).

A detail worthy of note is the fact that when textbooks and exercise books are available they have to be paid for. In Moscow, for example, pupils have to pay twenty-four roubles annually for school supplies (Basily, p. 359). This fact is confirmed by the *Bulletin of the People's Commissariat for Education* of May 20th, 1935, Article 258, and by *Russie et Chrétienté* of June, 1935.

There are schools for "normal" and "abnormal" children. This information alone will be sufficient to warn our readers of catastrophes to come—and the warning is well founded. The Examination Commissions in Moscow discovered that 10,000 out of 16,053 children had been arbitrarily classed as abnormal (*Izvestia* and *Trud*, September 28th, 1939). In Leningrad a similar error had been made with regard to 5,244 children out of 6,000 (*Izvestia*, August 27th, 1937).

Educational Desires and Educational Realities

A document entitled *Statutes of the Uniform Work School of the R.S.F.S.R.* was published at the beginning of the school year 1918-19. According to its prime author, Lunacharsky, it was destined "to carry the work of Russian education into first place in the civilized world."

According to the educational plan, children were to receive all school material free and be provided with a free lunch. All homework, admission and end-of-term examinations, etc., punishments, marks and diplomas, were rejected as "bourgeois." The school administration was confided to a collective body consisting of pupils, masters and other educational personnel, and to an educational council composed of masters and representatives of the education authorities, the local Soviet, the parents, and children over the age of twelve. In the view of certain visionary idealists, this system would lead rapidly to an integral collectivization of the youth—"parents having only an accidental authority over their children."

Four years later Lunacharsky concluded a long report on educational matters in the Soviet Union with the laconic words: "In short, our school system is on its last legs."

The first experiment having failed, a second was tried.

At the time of the New Economic Policy, the Bolshevik Government was compelled to cede an influential position to domestic capitalism, and in Lenin's view this could be remedied only by successful competition on the part of the State economic sector. In other words, the political retreat had to be compensated by an increase of technical capacity and Communist faith. This objective inspired the new Educational Statute of 1923. The great pedagogic invention this time was a new method of teaching, the so-called "integral method." Soviet schools no longer taught in the time-honoured fashion by specialized subjects, such as languages, history, mathematics, etc., but according to themes taken from everyday life, the idea being that the necessary specialized knowledge would develop either spontaneously or by specific comment. Each educational year revolved around one central theme: "The working life of the family in the village, or in the town." Then came "The working life of the village, or of the town, as a whole," and so on up to "The working life of the Soviet Union as a whole." The central complex was treated according to three aspects: "On the right, Nature; on the left, society; in the middle, labour."

This plan, exaggerated by the Bolshevik mania for turning everything upside down, and hampered by pseudo-Marxist inanities such as the "bourgeois" nature of specialization, and the "proletarian materialist" nature of "the integral method," was applied indiscriminately to the children of illiterates by masters hardly more literate. Naturally, it ended in a new fiasco. *Bulletins* Nos. 1 and 2 (1926) of the education authorities expressed official alarm at the situation:

"Our education is worthless as far as teaching the children to read and write and to count is concerned, or giving them a general education. . . . The peasants in the villages are grumbling. In the old days, they say, children learned better and more quickly."

The second experiment also having failed, a third was tried. This one was inspired by Bucharin and was therefore "a right-wing experiment." It did not last long, because the First Five-Year Plan was already rising above the horizon. The concessions it made to a more common-sense system of education were denounced as *kulak*, the word being both noun and adjective. Lunacharsky was replaced by Bubnov, who defined the teacher as "the nerve centre at the intersection of the class war between the past and the present, between the machinations of the *kulaks* and proletarian socialist activity." The teacher was exhorted to keep a cool head at this congested cross-roads in order that he might assimilate "the ideas

of the Five-Year Plan and the vigorous rhythm of socialist development in to the very marrow of his bones." Once in this state of topographical confusion and economic enthusiasm, he was further exhorted to adopt "a fighting attitude and to mobilize his pupils on the cultural front," without forgetting "Socialist competition to purge his own ranks from elements which deviate from the proletarian class line."

After all that, and without pausing for breath, the teacher was then urged to make his class into "a shock battalion" for industrial construction, and to admit only "social-sympathizing elements," whilst respecting the educational obligations imposed on the population as a whole. The squaring of this last-named circle was left entirely to his own initiative. To sum up, the school was to become the ante-room of the factory and an appendix of the propaganda section. It is not surprising, therefore, that the general level of culture and education fell to the depths indicated in the following question-and-answer exercise:

"*Mistress*: What would happen if world war broke out?

"*Pupil (proudly)*: We should then have the Soviet Power all over the world.

"*Mistress*: No; that's not right.

"The pupil looks blank and doesn't know what to say.

"*Mistress*: Look. I'll help you. What is it that's growing so fast?

[The pupil probably thinks of strawberries, but hasn't courage enough to say so.—S. L.]

"*Mistress*: What, you can't see what will grow so fast if a world war breaks out?

"And the pupil ought to reply: 'It is the world revolution' " (*Za Kommunisticheskoi Obrazovanie*, May 18th, 1933).

In 1932 Stalin decided to "relax the rhythm" of industrialization and collectivization, and in consequence the fourth educational experiment was buried. Those who had organized it—in so far as they were not shot out of hand—remorsefully admitted their "Trotskyite, Leftist and mechanistic" errors, and, with purified hearts and minds, rallied unanimously to experiment No. 5 on the list. "Lessons" were reintroduced, the authority of the teacher was re-established, set times were fixed in advance for each lesson, and, in place of "the mobile brigades" of the previous experiment, ordinary classes were reintroduced. At the same time severe discipline was introduced, together with a whole series of punishments to uphold it. From one extreme they all dived at once to the other, to the accompaniment of all the inevitable excesses. Masters called in the assistance of the police or handed over difficult children to them, and others began to flog their charges (*Pravda*, January 4th, 1937, and *Za Komm. Prosv.*, May 20th, 1935).

Article 1, paragraph 2, of the new disciplinary regulations

stipulated that "the clothing of the teacher shall be clean and neat in order to influence the emotive optical centres of the pupils and to inspire them with a desire for emulation." The new educational plan returned—of course under the inevitable label of "Soviet advanced culture"—to all the old "bourgeois prejudices" of the day before, and did not even hesitate to declare that "the aim of the school is to inculcate knowledge." It makes one wonder whether Stalin may not after all end up by preferring a proletarian mechanic capable of turning a piece efficiently on his lathe to a mechanized proletarian capable only of applauding every new political turn of his master.

Propaganda in Soviet Schools

Writing in the *Bolshevik* in December, 1946, V. N. Mikailov informs us that "the principal role in the education of the youth must be played by the propaganda of the Soviet State."

Youth is the age of both timidity and audacity. The character of youth is malleable and its heart is exalted. The State has good reason to fear almost anything from the youth: indignation, revolutionary spirit, terrorism, and it can crush anything: love, confidence, courage. In the opposition totalitarians made youth the vehicle of their unscrupulous ambition; in power they make it the haven of their tyranny.

The methods used to train and fanaticize the youth in Hitler's schools were the same as in Stalin's: political activity, such as the organization of meetings and the drafting of appeals; military training, including participation in the manoeuvres of the Army for children above the age of fourteen; co-operation with the police, including the denunciation of their own parents; and physical co-operation with the Gestapo and G.P.U. sections respectively. Lessons, games, lectures—all the occupations of the child and all his distractions—are so organized, so linked up and so coloured that the child may be brought to worship the idols of the régime: the machine, labour, the State, the Army, the party, and, above all, the Leader himself.

That complete regimentation of the school in the service of the State is too frankly admitted by Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini, and too well known to the general public to need stressing. However, let us quote the famous circular of February 17th, 1934, enjoining the headmasters of all primary and secondary schools under the Commissariat of Education of the R.S.F.S.R. to take immediate steps to include the decisions of the Party Congress and the Report of Stalin in their curricula. The actual text of the instructions gives precise details, of which the following extract affords some idea:

"The party, and political-ideological and organizational questions, will form the centre of study in all classes on the basis of the

masterly report of Comrade Stalin. . . . In the infant classes the master will proceed by means of commenting on extracts which he will insert in his lesson. . . . Masters who teach physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics will always find matter for their educational work in the decisions of the Congress. . . . Above all, the role of the Communist Party and the person of the great leader of the international proletariat, Comrade Stalin, must be stressed."

The logical consequence of propaganda in the school is the suppression of the school itself. Education gives way to regimentation, and the school gives way to the camp. The Soviet Government has not evaded that extremity. On October 2nd, 1940, it issued a decree enrolling 1,000,000 children of school age in industrial apprenticeship centres under the authority of a "Labour Reserves Committee" presided over by Moskatov. The war naturally led to an extension of this system, and, in addition, it lent it an appearance of justification. Five successive operations of this kind increased the number of children mobilized between the ages of twelve and sixteen years to 9 millions. When peace returned the industrial conscription of the youth continued, and in 1947 about 1,000,000 children of both sexes between the ages of fourteen and sixteen were called to the colours of the Five-Year Plan to spend nine months in apprenticeship schools, after which they were to be enrolled in the labour force of neighbouring factories.

"If this system is continued," writes Kravchenko, "and there is every reason to believe it will be, then by about the year 1960 the Soviet State will have between 30,000,000 and 40,000,000 workers trained in this military fashion at its disposal. That will be a new kind of 'proletariat.' Family influences and intellectual influences other than those prescribed by the authorities will have been reduced to a minimum. Completely indoctrinated with Stalinist theories, and having no idea whatever of personal liberty, these Russians will represent a formidable weapon in the hands of the régime both for domestic use and for foreign-political adventures."

Every appeal to the youth which is not a mechanical rally, every desire which is not for subjection, everything which permits one generation to surpass its predecessor and encourage the following generation to surpass it in its turn, everything which makes a human being think and renders societies liberal and humane, is throttled at birth in the Soviet Union. The deprivation of liberty is even worse in adolescence than it is in maturity, and the child who cons nothing but slogans is empty inside, and the simplest knowledge must curdle in his brain.

Ignorance is the result of tyranny as impotence is the result of fear.

INTELLECTUAL REGIMENTATION

"Bourgeois culture in Russia was miserable and insignificant, but it was still worth more than that of our responsible Communists."

Lenin.

LIBERTY IS THE OXYGEN of human culture. That truth has been so hammered into the democratic countries that it has ceased to excite discussion. However, we must go back to its source if the undertakings of the totalitarian States are to be branded with the dishonour they merit.

Liberty and Culture

The aim of culture is not to glorify, but to understand. Its method is not to believe but to doubt. Its origin is not satisfaction, but curiosity. Culture was born when a man first neglected his mill to dream of the wind that drove its sails and to ask: how? It trembled in the heart of the man who first left worship to the weak and lifted his head to the stars demanding: why? It measured its strength against the temerity of the soldier who stepped firmly from the ranks to demand of his king: where?

The fact that the question is asked at all, more than the question itself, constitutes the act of culture. Its renewal arises from the unwillingness of the human spirit to be satisfied with one answer alone. Certainly, philosophy draws up its systems, but they can be no more than convenient summaries of probabilities, provisional syntheses all tending to future analyses, the blazing of the trail, summits from which to look back on the road already traversed, and, above all, to look forward over, and to judge, the road still to be travelled. To hamper investigation and to stipulate in advance results pleasing to an existing régime—no matter how good the intentions—is to deny culture its liberty, for then a stage becomes a halt, and all halt involves death.

"In despotic countries tranquillity is not peace; it resembles the silence of those towns the enemy is about to occupy." Thus Montesquieu to the despot. The motionless unanimity of men's minds cloaks the final agony, and as even then the despot must still fear that the brilliant fever of the human spirit will not gutter and go out altogether, and that a vengeful delirium might yet break the immobility of thought, he must barricade the doors and draw the blinds. He turns the castle of men's minds into a prison.

He degrades inquiry into a prearranged catechism. He debases mankind into a flock of sheep.

The thought of man is an inadequate and ill-contrived instrument destined to measure an infinite and changeable reality. Its only hope of increasing human knowledge lies in its mobility. The man who seeks to impose his own formulas as ends in themselves instead of regarding them as links in a chain, the man who is satisfied with nothing but final certitudes, fears intelligence and respects force. Incapable of following the sinuous windings of truth and incapable of dreaming, both the Nazi and the Stalinist are not satisfied until they have succeeded in imposing their own narrow impotence on all others; and because they idealize inferiority they cannot be anything but fierce and intolerant.

As culture is by its very essence as free as the wind, so by its destiny it is as generous as pity. Violence and thought are incompatible, and that is why history always shows them apart from each other and implacably hostile. The barbarism of a nation can triumph amidst the tears of a generation, but a vanquished civilization will bask in the smile of all the generations to come.

Confined to the service of a political system, or of one country or one race alone, thought will stagnate. In the name of what political party could a man conclude that the earth turns on its axis or that the air nourishes the plants? In the name of what country can he know that the smiling face of woman is his damnation or his glory? In the name of what great army can he judge that two and two make four, or whether the governed should depend on the pleasure of those who govern them, or government on the willing consent of the governed, or whether the fault of man resides within him or in the outward conditions of his life, or whether the birds of the air love as men do, or know not how to weep? In the grand alternatives presented to mankind by human culture, the choice does not, and cannot, depend on which side of a frontier a man was born, or on a party he has once raised to power. No tyrant can ever kill enough men who think to impose either racial or class truths. All he can ever do is to impose unjust and bloody laws.

Let it be clear once and for all that the liberty necessary for the full flower of culture cannot be limited or partial. To-day when the primacy of opinion has made politics the arbiter of individual destinies, when technical development has made power and life closely interdependent, when all questions have become integral, and all answers are pregnant with great consequences, culture still demands, more than ever demands, of the body social the right to move freely and unconditionally. In the present mass eruption of human lava to the forefront of the political scene, the flight of the human spirit is still more dependent on the liberty of the citizen than ever before, and the security of all dictatorships depends still

more rigidly on the enslavement of the human spirit. And therefore the modern political terrorist régime is more than ever seized with that totalitarian rage which encroaches pitilessly on even the most intimate manifestations of the life of each individual human being.

Art is more sorely injured by the garrotte than even culture as a whole. Intelligence may gape a while at the propaganda of the century, but the measure of a dream is beyond all regimentation, and art is nothing but the chance discovery of the interior world. A world in relation with the exterior world by all means, and even determined by that exterior world if need be. But it is nevertheless true that underneath the outward social surface of man there exists a luxuriant growth of intimate tendencies, of strange arabesque-like associations, of infantile desires, austere or grand, which have no name and hardly a form. It is these interior fibres which give nuance to the individual and a voice to art. Their antennæ penetrate through the superstructure of conscience to reach the underlying fibres of other men, and those of society and nature, for they both possess such things. The artist is the man who reveals this universe interlaced with man's consciousness. He is the *Œdipus* who rejoins the thread of lost memories and retraces a path through the enchanted labyrinth of passions. He is the magician who finds the castle hidden under the growth of ivy, who finds the pond in the castle grounds and the court at the bottom of the pond.

If art is nothing but adventure, then it must perish without liberty. To try to make art defend a régime is folly. Its veil spreads out only on the incalculable zephyr of fantasy. Its home is the secret sea of personal experience. Its tendency, if it treats of society, is precisely to reveal something quite different from a régime. The canvas which presents young Germans marching past the Leader exalts neither the policy of Nuremberg nor the dolicephalous cranium of the great blond Arian. And if it touches the distressed and simple Nazi it is because it materializes the type of beauty which is near to him, because it glorifies his unformulated desire for tranquil fulfilment in obedience. Similarly, a picture of revolutionary struggle does not move its observers in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat or of a Soviet form of State. What makes the eye of the observer shine and his heart beat higher is the picture of the man in rags who feels himself a demiurge, or the child in the corner suddenly visited by gravity whilst losing nothing of the bloom on its cheeks, or the paving stones wrenched out of their silent and traditional submission to lend fierce and clumsy support to the revolt.

Or, truer still, it is the smiles and the tears of man's ecstasy rising high above all obstacles; it is the unexpected encounter of

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hope and distress, which releases the cry of the artist and an echo in the spectator. If the cry and the echo are in harmony with the régime, so much the better for the régime; if they are not, so much the worse for it. But let no government hope to change the result by force, and if it does then let it repudiate its artists and be content with photography.

By having revealed "the grain of things amongst the chaff of words," Marxism has schematized the beautiful and illimitable idea that conscience is a reflection of being; with unpardonable levity, it has reduced no matter what form of being to the plane of economics, and no matter what form of conscience to the plane of politics, forgetting that there are instincts below being and an unconscious below the conscious. The doctrine of Marx narrows down to the insidious slogan of Lenin that all life must be subordinated to the exclusive power of a political party, and its final degradation is accomplished in the lamentable injunction of Stalin that art must be an instrument of revolution, although if either is an instrument it can only be revolution in the service of art.

The enslavement of culture is not only obscurantism; it is a contradiction in terms.

Let us now observe the Soviet régime forcing that contradiction to its utmost limits.

Illiteracy

According to Soviet propaganda, the proportion of the Russian people able to read and write to-day is much greater than it was in 1914. Let us examine that statement.

We have seen that compulsory school attendance was not introduced until 1930. Up to 1926 the proportion of literates to the population as a whole was smaller than that which had been attained under Czarism up to 1914. From 1931 to 1934 the "dekulakization" and the consequence famine paralysed all progress. Thus it was only after 1934, in the period up to 1941, that the Russian school benefited from any general extension of elementary education. And that gain, purely quantitative, was often rendered valueless by propaganda, by the prevalent misery and by the excessive labours awaiting children in the factories when they left school. In the period from 1941 to 1945 war came to compromise the efforts made to ensure the success of obligatory elementary education.

Let us leave the question of problematic progress to one side, as belonging entirely to the future, and examine the cultural level of the masses of the people in the Soviet Union as it was just before the war. The population was essentially composed of men and women between the ages of sixteen and fifty—we must not forget

that the Soviet Union is primarily a country of young people. Citizens between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five went to school, if at all, between the years 1915 and 1934. From 1915 to 1922 war, Revolution, Civil War and famine made all schooling so doubtful that in 1923 the total number of children receiving any kind of schooling had fallen to the derisory figure of 3,000,000, or 2 per cent. of the population.

According to Soviet statements, this figure had increased to 7 per cent. in 1928 and to 13 per cent. in 1934. In the period in question it was thus on an average 5 per cent. Those citizens who were over thirty-five in 1938 had received their schooling under the old régime, and their educational baggage dated between the years 1895 and 1915, and what that amounted to can be seen from the proportion of the population at school, which was 4 per cent. Thus we can represent the cultural efforts which had been expended on the adult population of the Soviet Union as it existed in 1938 by an approximate average of 4.5 per cent. A calculation based on the same principle gives us the figure of 3.5 for the population as it existed in 1928.

The same category of the population taken in 1914 had been to school between the years 1880, when 1,340,000 children were taught, or 1.41 per cent. of the population, and 1911, when the figure had risen to 6,780,000, or 5.3 per cent. of the population. Be it noted that education given in private schools is included in our calculation. Thus what we may term its index of culture represents an average of 3.3 per cent. In other words, the adult citizens of Russia of the Five-Year Plans, which had index figures of 3.5 and 4.5, were not much better off educationally than their elders at the end of the Czarist régime. As a matter of comparison, in France, where children form a much smaller fraction of the population as a whole, the corresponding index figure is 15. This state of affairs, which is not widely known, will make the facts we are about to reveal more understandable.

In 1928 the *Pravda* (September 2nd) proudly announced that "illiteracy has been stabilized." This stabilization, be it noted, was made at a level of 60 per cent. illiterates, for the *Izvestia* of July 11th, 1929, gave this figure for that year, adding that it took no account of "backsliders into ignorance" who had forgotten the alphabet they had learnt. Since then the "liquidation of illiteracy" has become like the robe of Penelope, always worked on, never finished. Each year the task is proudly announced as completed, and in each subsequent year it is still there demanding attention. In 1934 the *Izvestia* (November 16th) admitted: "No one knows how many illiterates there are in the provinces." In 1937 some districts of occidental Russia had an average of 250 persons able to read and write as against between 1,300 and 2,000 illiterates

and "semi-literates" (*Za Komm. Prosv.*, September 17th, 1937). At the Seventeenth Party Congress Stalin ejaculated in despair: "Man has become undiscoverable; he has been replaced by the ignoramus." To which an echo might well have replied: "*Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin.*"

The "Red Corners"

High in the list of favoured themes of Stalinist propaganda is the network of "factory clubs," or "Red corners," which are said to represent an invaluable complement to the work of elementary education in the Soviet Union. In France and other civilized countries the authorities do not bother to keep total figures concerning the development of evening classes, trade-union classes, classes run by progressive employers, Sunday educational groups and other institutions for the useful occupation of the leisure hours of their citizens. However, there is little doubt that if the figures were known the comparison would not flatter the Soviet Union.

Apart from the really big towns and one or two publicity shows for tourists, one might well ask what these so-called "Red corners" can really amount to in a country and in a period where the possession of a table constitutes no more than a daring dream. The majority of the descriptions of such corners as they appear in self-critical utterances in the Soviet Press give a picture of rather dingy places, with or without roofs, provided with broken-down forms and a lamp usually without oil, and decorated with a few torn scraps of red bunting turned brown even before the régime itself. The only articles found in abundance in such places are portraits of the great Leader himself and of his subordinates, and pamphlets and newspapers. And what is carried on in such corners if not pure propaganda? The leading spirits of such institutions never let an opportunity slip by to display their own culture, of which the following is a typical example:

"You have read in the *Pravda* that our writers have organized a discussion on formalism, which is a survival of bourgeois decadence. Naturalism is a Left-Wing deviation. Such errors must be liquidated. We are now going to send them a letter to assist them in their struggle, and to denounce the counter-revolutionary tendencies in literature, which our inspired Comrade Stalin, Father of the Peoples, has said contributes to forging the new man" (quoted by Herbart, p. 32).

Although this picture is painted by a tourist, "a poisonous viper," who subsequently showed himself to be in the pay of all the evil "isms" there are, it can nevertheless not easily be refuted for the simple reason that similar incidents can be found described in the *Pravda* itself. Here we are in the "Red corner" of a *kolkhoze*:

"The propagandist turns to an old peasant: 'You, Uncle Memnon, you tell me what you understand about the special qualities of our Constitution and in what respects it differs from bourgeois constitutions.'

"The old man thus addressed got up, coughed, gaped and cracked his fingers. . . . The propagandist passed on to another one. More severely: 'You, Eustace Federovitch, tell us what the property is called you have been entrusted to guard? To whom does it belong?'

"The old man, sixty years old and already quite white, is the stableman of the *kolkhoze*. He begins to speak:

" 'Well . . . Truly . . . It's like this. It's like I was at school, miss. Perhaps you'd let me off. I . . . '

" 'No excuses! Answer me. You talk enough in the stables, for hours on end' " (*Pravda*, October 27th, 1937).

Our readers will already have had occasion to note that the morsels of "self-criticism" displayed in the Soviet Press let slip a multitude of interesting revelations concerning the most diverse aspects of daily life in Russia under the Soviet régime. On this occasion we are treated to a picture of the total and amiable ignorance of the mass of the peasants; the arrogance of the propagandists; the domineering fashion in which they treat the peasants; the respectful "miss" when the peasants address them; the suspicion of "deviation by silence"; and the traditional Stalinist method of affirming the merits of the object under discussion even in the form of the question.

Mercifully, such meetings are rare. When the ordinary worker or peasant has finished his week's work, how often does he have to volunteer to perform a *subotnik*, or work on his free day, in order to make up the leeway of all the famous plans! And when he has finished his normal day's work how often does he have to work supplementary hours for the same reason—or even to demand them with enthusiasm! And when he has at last finished with it all, his normal work, his supplementary work and his *subotnik*, how often must he suffer that daily misery of the Russian consumer, the accursed queue. At the end of such a day little time remains not only for the "Red corner" but also for the lecture, the essential auxiliary of the auto-didact.

"At the factory [one of the more advanced, entitled to the designation of Red Flag factory for its successful production] the dormitory is half in darkness. There is one feeble little lamp suspended from the ceiling. There is no sign of any cultural work of any kind, not even a table at which to read or work" (letter of a worker in the *Izvestia*, August 21st, 1935).

The old Frenchwoman whose diary has already borne witness to her condition was a domestic servant and lived in one corner

of a room inhabited by her employers, screened from them by a white sheet:

"Obliged to listen against my will to their insupportable discussions there is nothing surprising in the fact that I am nervous and irritable. If I were alone, I could work at something, or write. . . . That would be life" (Herbart, p. 126).

In short, it is impossible to study at home because there is no "at home," and it is impossible to study at the club because there is no study. Workers go to the Red Corners to look through the newspapers. And they look through the newspapers to find out where they can get a pair of shoes or some soap.

Another drag on the spread of popular culture is the encouragement of linguistic particularism. Under the pretext of encouraging the development of national autonomy—to which it is in no way bound by its internationalist doctrine—Bolshevism has decided that each of the 180 nationalities in the Soviet Union shall use only its own tongue. In application of this principle, the *Bulletin of the Commissariat of Education* of September 27th, 1935, instructs all higher schools and technical schools to teach, according to the region, in Evenkian, Nenetz, Khantyi, Mansy, Selkoup, Tchukotian, Paretz and Nanai. At the same time, philosophical and literary ideas must be taken from the treasure store of these particular nationalities, from the works of Evenkian, Nenetzian, Khantian authors, etc. If there are no such authors, they are simply invented. If the language does not possess all the words required in modern life, then they are also invented, whereby care is taken to ensure that they are not borrowed from the common Greek and Latin fund of international terminology. If the national culture of Evenkian, Nenetzian and so on has managed to get on without an alphabet, one is invented whole, and so on.

The only effect of this tyrannous solicitude for the national genius of these small peoples is to cut off a good part of the population from Russian culture and to deliver them up bound hand and foot to local instructors, themselves a reflection of Moscow. Perhaps that does not represent a very great aggravation in view of the obscurantism deliberately inflicted on the users of Russian, but it is something, and no doubt Stalin thinks that a little is better than nothing. This philological patriotism of the Soviet Government is nothing but a new version of the old principle of divide and rule, as can be seen from the centralist rod of iron which represses all other important elements of the specific life of the national minorities.

And as to the millions of people who inhabit the concentration camps—why shouldn't they have Red Corners too? After all, what is there in a Red Corner, and what has a convict got to live for?

Sausage Machines for Ignoramuses

There are thousands and thousands of "institutes," "centres for higher learning," "technical schools" and so on throughout the Soviet Union, and they confer hundreds of thousands of diplomas on their graduates every year. And yet at the Eighteenth Party Congress Molotov was compelled to confess: "Our middle cadres lack even the most elementary knowledge." The "Stalin" factory in Moscow did very badly in 1930 with 410 engineers and technicians—that is to say, 8 per cent. of the entire personnel. In 1939, with no less than 5,196 engineers and technicians, or about 20 per cent. of the total personnel, it did even worse. The same result was obtained in the Soviet Union as a whole with eight times more technicians in 1937 than in 1926, and six times as many licentiates and doctors of various disciplines. And Stalin in desperation asks himself: What is the origin of this sabotage?

However, there is no mystery about the result at all. Just as tons of bricks and mortar erected into giant factories do not make Socialism, so bundles of diplomas issued by pedagogical institutes do not make engineers. Such institutes are included in Soviet statistics before they are set up; their lecture halls are opened to students before there are seats for them to sit down on; their libraries are purged before they are provided with books. Small wonder then that they send out graduates who can hardly count, and that they hold diplomas in hands they have hardly learnt to wash. All foreigners who have worked in the Soviet Union are in agreement on the point, and they all confirm that the majority of Soviet so-called engineers, trained in extremely specialized branches such as "the locomotive," "the rail," "the drilling of holes for oil," have a level of training and knowledge which would at the utmost permit them to aspire in other countries to the job of foreman. The Soviet technical and engineering élite rarely rise above the level of technical assistants in other countries. Sometimes even diplomas issued to graduates have not been gained by any course of study, as the following example shows:

"I enrolled for a book-keeping course by correspondence with the Centrosoyus, 17 Bolshoi Tcherkassy, Moscow. I never received any textbooks or any lessons, but one fine day a diploma arrived for me as a book-keeper by virtue of Decision No. 1,282 of the Presidium of the Centrosoyus, complete with a number of very imposing signatures" (letter from Citizen Noskov to the *Krokodil*, No. 14 of 1937).

University Graduates

On February 2nd, 1936, the *Pravda* published the following astonishing table concerning the education of Soviet teachers:

<i>Education received by the teacher</i>	<i>School at which he teaches</i>	
	<i>Elementary school</i>	<i>Secondary school</i>
Elementary education up to eleven or twelve years of age	<i>Per cent.</i> 34·8	<i>Per cent.</i> 9
Secondary education up to fifteen or seventeen years of age	63·7	66·2
Higher education	1·5	24·7

This illuminating table reveals not only that more than a third of all Soviet teachers at elementary schools, and two-thirds of the teachers at secondary schools, have received no higher education than what they teach, but that 9 per cent. of the secondary school-teachers have themselves received only an elementary school education. Further, many teachers listed as having received "higher education" have never received a secondary education, as can be seen from a decree issued on November 9th, 1935, which provides for the recruitment of 5,650 Stakhanovites as candidates for higher education training schools, which turn out masters and at the same time dispense them from the normal necessity of possessing a secondary-school diploma. Four thousand workers had to prepare themselves for entry into these same schools within a period of six months, and 1,000 of them continued to work in the factories during that period. This forced instruction, poorly remunerated, seems little to the liking of the candidates, for the *Izvestia* of November 20th, 1936, declares: "Pupils pay no heed to pressing appeals for them to enter teachers' training schools." And on November 22nd, 1936, the *Izvestia* lamented anew: "The students at these teachers' training schools are birds of passage. In the R.S.F.S.R. alone, within the space of three years, more than 80,000 students left the teachers' training schools without completing their course of study." Incidentally, the number of students enrolled at these schools in 1936 was 60,000. And the newspaper proceeded to paint this sombre picture of conditions "on the pedagogical front":

"The preparation of teachers, both from the point of view of quality and quantity, is very unsatisfactory. . . . Only between 40 per cent. and 50 per cent. of the candidates estimated actually take up the courses, and the preparation of living accommodation for these students is sometimes only 8 per cent. of the actual needs. . . .

A whole series of institutions have not even one professor. . . . About half of those who are to be future masters have not had a higher education themselves. . . . Up to the present, there are neither curricula nor teaching textbooks available. Students who have completed their courses are often unable to write correctly; they make innumerable mistakes, and know nothing of arithmetic, history, geography or natural science."

And the *Trud* of December 18th, 1936, declares in despair: "The theme of teachers themselves illiterate is inexhaustible."

The plain truth about Soviet educational conditions is such that it appears highly improbable and almost incredible to the outsider. The Finnish authorities brought Soviet prisoners to the microphone during the war and broadcast their answers to the simplest questions. The result was so devastating that many European listeners suspected trickery: "Berlin is the capital of France," "Turkey is in Scandinavia," and so on. But long before the Finns got the idea, the Soviet authorities themselves conducted cultural quizzes—not amongst ordinary soldiers, but amongst their own professors. The result was equally devastating. Some of them were unable to point out the position of Caucasia on the map, or to indicate the frontiers of the Soviet Union. Others could hardly read or make simple calculations. Out of 14,000 teachers examined in one district, 723 were forbidden to teach after having "completed" their training; 10,200 of the others were allowed to teach provisionally, with the obligation of continuing their studies in order to attain the requisite qualifications (*Pravda*, January 3rd, 1937).

Some of the results of a similar investigation were published in the *Izvestia* of September 11th and 16th, 1936, and in the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of September 10th, 1936. A diplomaed teacher declared that Vienna was the capital of England and that Geneva was in Warsaw. Professors of literature proved incapable of explaining the difference between prose and poetry, and had not read a single book, "not even Tolstoy or Gorki." A teacher of German proved to have no knowledge whatever of that language, and a teacher of English was found to be in the same state of ignorance (*Pravda*, January 19th, 1937). One man whose job was to teach belles-lettres, insisted that Pushkin was still alive. "What makes you think that?" the examiner asked. "They talk such a lot about him in the papers," was the assured answer. A man teaching geography owed his post to the fact that he had been a mechanic on the Trans-Siberian Railway (*Izvestia*, September, 1936).

Flabbergasting! Unbelievable! Impossible!

Either the body of teachers in the Soviet Union has been slandered; in which case, what are we to think of the official Press which so slanders them? Or it is all true; in which case, why have they lied to us so shockingly about their brilliant "advance-guard"

culture? Unfortunately, the second hypothesis is patently accurate. The instances of Soviet diploma-bearers with no culture at all are innumerable, and they provide the Soviet satirical journal *Krokodil* with a good portion of its anecdotes. Most of the students of the faculties, the élite of the élite, are no less disappointing. At the height of the Stakhanovite fever, a goodly number of "shock workers" who were illiterate were promoted university students from one day to the next. The Soviet Government apparently thought it could replace the ten years' study required in any other country by a galvanizing decree of the Commissariat of Education. This decree, dated February 7th, 1933, instructs the proper authorities:

"To draw up a list of 'semi-illiterate' students and fix a date by which their 'semi-illiteracy' must be definitely liquidated." A list of the measures to be taken to this desirable end then follows, including:

"4 (b). The organization of consultations on questions in the struggle against orthographic and grammatical illiteracy.

"5. The establishment of a united front in the struggle for orthography and for the culture of the word from the director of the Institute down to the employees in the laboratories in order that each shall struggle according to his capacities against defective orthography.

"10. To create an environment for the students in accordance with orthography: every announcement, every placard, every line of a wall newspaper must be irreproachable with regard to orthography" (*Digest of Laws and Decrees of the Soviet Union*, Moscow, published in part in other countries).

This "United Front from Above" was probably like all others, notoriously opportunist, and orthographical faults replied by a "United Front from Below" and triumphed all along the line.

"Our students write with the grossest orthographic errors. . . . There are many illiterates even in the Faculty of Letters" (*Pravda*, February 27th, 1935). "In our Institute 150 students are taking a course for the liquidation of illiteracy—and they call it a High School for Teachers!" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, January 3rd, 1936). "In a dictated piece of 200 words the student T. made 59 errors, the student P. 83 errors, and the student S. 90 errors. It is difficult to believe that that dictation was written by young people about to graduate from a university. Most of these students are unable to write two words without making mistakes, yet they get their diplomas and then go off to become masters" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, May 14th, 1938).

In its number of December 12th, 1935, the same newspaper cites even more extraordinary cases of ignorance amongst scientific personnel. The physicist Korsaeiev was unable to mention the name of a single well-known foreign physicist, or even a well-known

Soviet physicist. He had never even heard of Kirchoff. When he was asked what foreign literature he had consulted in connection with his thesis (analysis of a reaction receiver) he replied simply: "None at all; no work is being done on this subject abroad." (Note: the reaction receiver is an early model which is practically obsolete in modern wireless equipment; the German "People's Receiver," which was manufactured in millions, was a reaction receiver.)

And, mortal sin: the holders of emeritus diplomas of the Soviet Faculty of Law, decorated with the Order of the Red Flag, had "never read or even heard of Marx's *Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Law!*" (*ibid.*, December 12th, 1935).

Doctoral and professorial titles are distributed with engaging fantasy. The *Digest of Decrees of the Commissariat for Education* of October, 1935, records the names of eighty-two doctors who have never written a thesis, and of professors of faculties who have never attained the doctoral degree. The Academy of Science of White Russia appoints doctors of biology without examining the candidates or their work. It appointed an unknown to a Chair of "Materialist Dialectics" on the basis of three elementary articles appearing in a magazine (*Izvestia*, March 18th, 1936). The *Pravda* of November 13th, 1935, reveals similar scandals at the Institute of History and the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow.

These official admissions confirm the evidence of Yvon Delbos:

"Twenty-seven doctors in charge of courses at the Institute of Agriculture have never even written their doctoral theses. Most of them were recruited for their posts by means of advertisements in the Press. . . . The time devoted to the various subjects studied during the three-year course at this Institute is as follows:

	<i>Hours</i>
"Dialectical materialism . . .	100
Theory of Soviet economy . . .	70
Leninism and nationality questions . . .	80
Organization of Socialist economy . . .	70
Marxian history of technique . . .	30

"As against this 350 hours devoted to politics there were 240 hours of chemistry and 150 hours of physics. Physical exercise was almost on a level with physics in that it took up 120 hours of the course" (Delbos, pp. 125 *et seq.*).

We have already mentioned the swarm of "technical institutes" all over the Soviet Union. At Poltava, for instance, there is an "All-Union Institute for the Special Investigation of Pig-breeding along Scientific Lines." The problems of drilling have their institute, as also has the cultivation of apples and the battle against weevils. More often than not these pompous titles cover a model farm

(at least a farm intended to be model), a "laboratory" (full of pamphlets) and a hot-house (with broken windows). The training imparted at such institutions is very much inferior to that given at elementary agronomical courses in Western Europe. However, that does not prevent Molotov from adding up all the students of these pseudo-institutions and announcing loudly that there are 550,000 students (Molotov, III). This figure provides him with the opportunity of making an elated comparison with the total number of students in France, Germany, Italy, Great Britain and Japan put together.

The President of the Soviet Council, an experienced performer on the tight-rope of Socialist statistics, conveniently forgets that in any case the total populations of the countries mentioned amount to only twice the population of the Soviet Union, and, what is much more important, only real faculty students count in these countries, and that the total of students at technical high schools, secondary schools and elementary technical schools is at least ten times as great. Further, the educational level of these 550,000 students in the Soviet Union is not recognized as sufficient to permit them entry into any faculty or any technical high school in any of the countries mentioned, whereas the educational level of the 100,000 Russian students of Czarist days was sufficient to open the doors of all higher educational institutions throughout the world. To assist Molotov to understand this strange anomaly, we would draw his attention to a common principle of thermodynamics: millions of calories consumed at low temperature are not sufficient to boil one egg.

The Survivors of Culture

The preceding pages of this book will doubtless bring us the reproach that we have exaggerated, first of all on account of the astonishing facts we have revealed, and secondly because we offend against the sentiment of admiration which is so widespread, thanks to Russian successes in the late war. Although the régime may be wanting on the political field, we shall be told, nevertheless, it cannot be denied that it has met with prodigious success on the economic field, and in particular with regard to its scientific and technical plans. And Soviet propaganda sets out to exploit that fond belief by circulating convincing descriptions of the splendid equipment of its laboratories and the genius of its savants. We must therefore devote a few words to the real élite in the Soviet Union.

First of all, be it understood that we do not deny the existence of that élite. Our criticism has never been directed against the intellectual virtues of the Russian people, which, in fact, we rate highly. In our chapter on the Red Army we have said that the Russian soldier is courageous and intelligent. Dictatorship, terror

and misery combined are still not strong enough to crush the natural genius of a people entirely. Amongst the legions of students and pseudo-students with which prolific and endless Russia can people her universities and pseudo-universities there need be no more than an infinitesimally small fraction of exceptional men and women, and there you have the nucleus of an authentic scientific élite. Genius in mathematics, physics and physiology has always existed in all countries and under all political régimes, even the most tyrannous. Let us not forget that the exact sciences possess a life of their own, a mechanism of such persistent force that even when it is outwardly bedizened with political fripperies its blood continues to circulate beneath the absurd show and its results to accumulate. It represents the last activity of man which religious or political intolerance can stifle. Witness Galileo under the Inquisition, Max Planck under Hitler, and Fermi under Mussolini.

And, further, once his rage for monolithic subordination is assuaged, Stalin does not cheese-pare where the technical and scientific requirements of his State are concerned. We have already pointed out that industrialization constitutes one of the pillars of his régime, which is miserly with liberties, but not with roubles. And in fact Stalin has generously equipped the higher institutions of research whilst not ceasing to persecute such savants as do not prudently keep themselves within the bounds of their researches. In addition, there are still many technicians in various fields who laid the basis of their knowledge under Czarism, and it is preferably these men who are sent abroad. Those who come into contact with them are naturally struck with the thoroughness of their knowledge. But, nevertheless, the fact remains that, thanks to the political terror in the Soviet Union, the lower intelligentsia is very mediocre.

To sum up, although it is true that here and there in the Soviet Union there are superb institutes with brilliant personnel, it is also true that there are innumerable wretched institutes filled with ignorant Stakhanovites and one-time capacities whose spirit has been broken, the timid survivors of a dozen and one bloody purges. Although here and there we find really outstanding men, a Pavlov survived from the old régime, a Kapitza developed under the new, we must still ask ourselves how many such men might have been produced in a quarter of a century by a humane and liberal régime, and how much progress they could have made in a science free from the control of the Secret Police.

Despite an occasional scientific oasis, which is exploited to the full in Soviet publicity, the fact remains that on the cultural field the misdeeds of Stalinism far outweigh its benefits. A small constellation of brilliant Soviet scientists may reassure us that genius persists despite the dictatorship and the terror, but it does not prove that the dictatorship and the terror have not been pernicious to human thought.

The Troubles and Trials of Proletarian Literature

To attempt to force art into the service of politics is particularly absurd when the politics are proletarian and art has to pretend to be proletarian too. The conditions of the proletariat should be abolished, not praised. Such conditions have inspired the indignation of Socialists precisely because they are incompatible with culture, and the only possible solution is to de-proletarianize the proletariat and raise it to the level of art. By its insistence on precisely the opposite Soviet culture has condemned itself to a speedy and inglorious end.

Immediately after the Russian Revolution the Futurist school of the poet Mayakovsky, the painter Pounine and the composer Lourie tried to justify its existence by declaring: "Futurism is identical with proletarian art; futurism is the ideology of the proletariat."

However, the favour of the Soviet Government was soon withdrawn from them and conferred upon the association "Proletcult" (a shortening of the words "Proletarian culture") under the leadership of the writer Bogdanov. Its aim, no less "orthodox" than that of the Futurists, was "to create a Socialist and proletarian literature, both in the field of belles-lettres and in the field of science, in accordance with the revolutionary and Communist ideals of the proletariat." Apparently the movement did not show sufficient respect to the General Line after all, for this second attempt was suppressed by Lenin, Trotsky and Bucharin.

The N.E.P. came to spread its thin ray of liberal hope. In the last year of his life at a time when, as we have already seen, he was much perturbed by the lack of culture on the part of Communist cadres, Lenin publicly recognized that "it is premature as yet to bury the heritage of bourgeois art in the museums." Trotsky patronized a group of writers whom he called "Fellow Travellers," and who included Boris Pilniak, I. Babel, C. Fedin, L. Leonov and a number of writers who had attained a certain notoriety even before the Revolution, such as Alexis Tolstoy, Ilya Ehrenburg and Michael Bulgakov. "Their art," wrote Trotsky, "is not identical with the proletarian revolution; they are merely going part of the way with us." Within the margin of that deliberate tolerance, one or two works of real value were created. But before long the factional warfare within the party, and then the twilight of the New Economic Policy, came to submerge Russian letters.

The "Fellow Travellers" were organized in the Pan-Russian Union of Writers and they sympathized with Trotsky. Stalin therefore set up a rival organization known as the Association of Proletarian Writers. Under the leadership of Auerbach, and with the assistance of the Secret Police all the semi-literate scribblers

available were organized into "shock groups." Even in 1924 the new Stalinist Association condemned the "Fellow Travellers" as "neutralists" and declared that their attitude was "incompatible with the dictatorship of the proletariat." Thanks to Stalin's apparatus, the Association succeeded in getting hold of all publishing houses to the exclusion of the "Fellow Travellers." "As soon as they [the Association] looked askance at a writer, his career was finished. . . . They reduced brilliant and talented writers to silence, and their only criterion was political" (Louis Fischer).

The Association finally triumphed over the Union at the same time as Stalin triumphed over Trotsky, and in 1930 it got itself accepted by the Congress of Writers in Kharkov, at which twenty-two countries were represented. This congress drew up a certain number of commandments which even excellent writers were weak enough to underwrite in the name of Bolshevik prestige.

"Proletarian art renounces individuality.

"The proletarian artist must be a dialectical materialist.

"Proletarian art must be collectivized.

"Proletarian art must be disciplined.

"Proletarian art must be organized.

"Proletarian art must be created under the prudent but firm direction of the Communist Party.

"Proletarian art must be a weapon in the class war" (resolution of the International Congress of Proletarian Writers and Artists in Kharkov in 1930).

During the industrializing storm which arose in connection with the First Five-Year Plan, the Association solemnly declared through its mouthpiece, Bezymenski: "The *raison d'être* of literature is solely to execute the instructions of Comrade Stalin in the social field." These instructions were, literally, sub-titled: "The Five-Year Plan for Poetry," "The Magnitostroi of Art," "Class Vigilance on the Publishing Front," "Shock Troops on the Painting Front," "Pass and Surpass Shakespeare and Tolstoy."

In 1932 Stalin relaxed the tempo of industrialization and immediately, like a faithful shadow of political fluctuations, Soviet literature abandoned its search for warlike formulas, which were now condemned as "formalism" or "Red romanticism," and turned its attentions, under the label of "Socialist realism," to the simple glorification of Stalin and whatever the Soviet Power might happen to be doing at any given moment. Then from 1935 onwards it began to find a certain justification for the traditional order of things and to restore the literary glories of ancient Russia to their old prestige.

In 1934 the Association, although it had always crouched humbly at the feet of Stalin, was dissolved, and the "slimy band," consisting of Auerbach-Bezymenski and Co., were accused of every possible

Trotskyite deviation imaginable, and physically exterminated. A new Union of Soviet Writers was founded, and it included by order all pre-existing groups. The leadership was placed in the hands of Gorki, Cholokov and Fadeyev, who then drew up definitive historic statutes:

"Article I. The decisive condition for the development of literature, for its artistic perfection, for its ideological value and its practical efficacy, is the close and intimate connection of the literary movement with the current problems of the party policy and of the Soviet Government—in other words, the active participation of writers in the building up of Socialism.

"Article II. The Union of Soviet Writers proposes to realize this essential task: to create works of a high artistic value representing the expression of the heroic battle of the international proletariat, works imbued with a victorious Socialist spirit, works which reflect the great wisdom and heroism of the Communist Party" (*Pravda*, May 6th, 1934).

These lines do not differ from the jargon in constant use since 1917 except by a still greater degree of conformism and by one or two nuances recognizable only to the initiates. Soviet phraseology is still marked by an ingenious pathos and Red imagery involved in a deliberately hazy logical structure. In face of the obscurity of the thought of the Master and the redoubtable surprises he can suddenly spring, logomachy remains the only possible method of preventive defence. In addition, it has the advantage of deceiving others who, in good faith, regard the copying out of certain chosen passages from good Marxist authors as a proof of fidelity towards the Revolution. The foreign historian desirous of avoiding the constant traps present in Russian texts must perform a ceaseless work of translation and exegesis, and his surest guide is the comparative chronology of never-ending executions.

Now, the literary section of the Secret Police having discovered, admitted and decided that "Socialist realism" was the only and unique vessel of Soviet dialectical materialist truth, opened up a campaign, carefully prepared in advance and orchestrated by constant fusillades. The faithful Stalinists abroad gravely affected to regard it as "a fundamental debate on human culture."

At "the creative discussion in Moscow," the Party delegate, Stavsky, denounced "the absence of self-criticism amongst Soviet writers, the formalist monstrosities and all the contortions of formalism in poetry and prose" and, of course, the inevitable "deviation of silence" (*Pravda*, March 11th, 1936). Whilst obediently applauding "the destroyers of formalism," Mariette Chaguiniane, relying, it would appear, on the privileged position conferred on her by her past excess of zeal (she had boasted of having "unmasked" a class enemy in the person of a poor old peasant beggar-woman),

timidly dared to appeal for "the preservation of cultural values in questions of taste." Immediately a flood of insults and abuse was poured out on the heretic, culminating in the following two-point resolution of the Union of Soviet Writers published in all Soviet newspapers on February 29th, 1936:

"The Presidium of the Executive of the Union of Soviet Writers condemns in a decisive fashion the declaration made by Mariette Chaguiniane on the subject of her breach with the Union of Soviet Writers and denounces that breach as a profoundly anti-social act. . .

"The Presidium . . . takes into consideration the declaration made by Mariette Chaguiniane at the session of the Presidium by which she confessed that her declaration of a breach with the Union and the motives put forward represented a gross political error."

The same misadventure happened to the Soviet writer, Constantine Fedin, whose novel *Towns and Men*, attracted a certain amount of attention abroad. His last novel, *The Rape of Europe*, was torn to pieces and he was so thoroughly drubbed that in the end he was compelled to declare over the corpse of his own work: "I now understand that it is absolutely necessary that there should be concrete Soviet images. . . . Quite frankly, I did not succeed in finding for my novel the proper Soviet hero, which is the aim of our literature." This embarrassing confession and expression of repentance was recorded in the *Izvestia* of May 6th, 1936, which, however, continued to flog the repentant victim in the time-honoured Stalinist fashion:

"Since on your own you don't know how to find the hero you must belaud, we can show you one. Look. Make the acquaintance of a heroic Stakhanovite named Tutene. . . . If you cannot summon up sufficient ardour to belaud him, so much the worse for you."

An author of "formalist" memoirs on the Revolution was compelled to make a retraction whose "realism" consisted simply in a kick at the dead body of the suicide Tomski:

"I regard it as a mistake to have spoken, by error, of Tomski in my memoirs of the October days. I ought all the more to have avoided it, because Tomski took no part in the October struggles in Moscow" (reported in the *Pravda*, December 29th, 1936).

For having mistakenly supposed that the principle of self-criticism authorized him to brand-mark a local boss whose measures oppressed his workers, Makarov witnessed his novel, *Misha Kourbatov*, damned as "slandorous, demagogic and purulent" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, February 26th, 1937). Kurotchkin successfully avoided any deviation from the General Line in his novel *My Comrades*, but he did make several of his characters, a thief, a lost girl and a Young Communist, declare regretfully "Never to have felt oneself young!" and for this he was placed in the pillory.

"His formalistic heroes show no trace of the cultural revolution which has transfigured and re-educated humanity in the Soviet Union during the past twenty years. Perhaps there are backward elements amongst our youth, but how can one show them in a literary work without rising above them and condemning them in a realistic and creative fashion?" (*Literaturnaya Gazieta*, No. 20 of 1939).

The Soviet Government does not hesitate to commit the cruel perfidy of mocking at those who have become contemptible only in obeying its orders:

"Here is one who but yesterday in his novel, *The Three Days*, insults love as 'only an occupation for parasitic classes,' and to-day, realizing that the critics approve, he preaches love with the self-same ardour in his tale, *Friendship*" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, March 19th, 1936).

The campaign for "Socialist realism" culminated on the fixed day by the adoption of the following resolution of the Presidium of the Union of Soviet Writers, inaugurating Secret Police control even of the process of artistic production:

"The immediate result of our discussions must show itself in an organization of our work of such a nature that not only must works already completed be presented to the judgment of the Union of Soviet Writers, but also plans and sketches for forthcoming work, in order that the Union may judge what its members propose to do" (*ibid.*).

Fortunately for Soviet writers, Stalinism has repudiated psychoanalysis, otherwise their Presidium would doubtless have demanded that they submit regular and exact reports of their dreams.

With the rehabilitation of patriotic ideals, Socialist realism rapidly developed into authentic Old Russian sentimentalism. Soviet writers henceforth had to devote their work to glorifying the nobles, the scourges of the Russian people and the heroes of the Little Father. Comrade Chichkov belauded "Emil Pugatchev," Borodin produced a heroic portrait of Dmitri Danskov, Sergeiv Tsensky made an epic out of the Brussilov Drive. The novels with these titles were launched on a wave of intense publicity. Naturally, during the war this new patriotic vein found inexhaustible material. Grossman in the novel, *The Immortal People*, Voitekhov, in *The Last Days of Sebastopol*, Sobolev in *The Soul of the Sea* and Mme. Vasilevska in *The Rainbow*, all exalt the exploits of the heroes of the Fatherland in accents of great pathos. It was a period in which writers could go in wholeheartedly for patriotism and love of Holy Russia in poems, novels and epics without having to bother about giving their work a "proletarian and Socialist" tinge. The poetess Anna Akhmatova and the novelist Michail Zoschenko excelled at this sort of thing, and they were crowned with the respective titles of

"modern Pushkins and Chekhovs." The abandonment of all special considerations of "class content" and of Marxist-Bolshevist doctrine in Soviet patriotism encouraged writers to cultivate art for art's sake in accordance with the time-honoured traditions of their profession.

Once the war was ended and Stalin felt himself quite safe in the saddle again, his natural inclination towards the political harnessing of all forms of human activity was again in a position to express itself freely, with the result that a storm now broke over the devoted heads of the "modern Pushkins and Chekhovs." Let us note particularly that the new martyrs were not punished for allowing their inspiration to roam at will beyond the limits set by the Soviet authorities, for, like everyone else in the Soviet Union, the latest victims had never ceased at any time to obey their instructions. They are, like so many before them, merely the unfortunate scapegoats of the new tack, the expiatory victims of a political realignment hatched within the Kremlin walls with a view to lining up the Russian people against the Yankee plutocrats and the capitalist world in general.

On August 21st, 1946, the Central Committee of the Communist Party passed a resolution which, after having declared that "Soviet literature is the most advanced in the world," proceeded to re-hobble this same literature in the following terms: "Soviet literature must abandon its sordid complaisance with its own affairs and devote itself in a Bolshevik fashion to assisting the State to educate the youth." The literary magazines, *Leningrad* and *Zvezda*, ceased publication; the journalist Nikolai Tikhonov was sent into the wilderness, and the former literary idols, Anna Akhmatova and Michail Zoschenko, were pulled from their pedestals and thoroughly belaboured: the "modern Pushkin" because she had "filled her work with a pessimist and decadent spirit fitted only to the salon verse of capitalist countries," and the "modern Chekhov" because he had written "vain and insipid matter, empty of content, and calculated to disorientate the youth and poison its conscience."

Twenty-four hours later the Leningrad branch of the Union of Soviet Writers published a resolution in which, after having obediently repeated that "the task of literature consists in assisting the State in the education of the youth" (we seem to remember that Hitler in *Mein Kampf* and Mussolini in *The Fascist Development of Man* used similar language), the Soviet writers of Leningrad declared enthusiastically that they were "filled with a desire to liquidate with as short a delay as possible the enormous faults of their works by taking the resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party as the basis for their creative efforts, a resolution of very great profundity manifesting the great solicitude of the party, and in particular of Comrade Stalin, for Soviet writers

and for the decisive restoration of literature" (*Izvestia*, August 28th, 1946).

And then without loss of time the All-Russia Presidium of the Union of Soviet Writers hastened to accept the historic resolution in an equally humble spirit, finding it "full of wisdom and correct in all respects," and agreeing equally to take it as the basis of all literary work to come. Poor "Pushkin and Chekhov" were both expelled from the Union of Soviet Writers, and their work was barred from all publications and all publishing facilities, because they had failed to respect that important article of the Union statutes which obliged all writers "to place themselves on the platform of the Soviet power." The Union then demanded of all its members that henceforth they should "arm themselves with the instructions of Comrade Stalin and express in their works the nature of capitalist encirclement, its corrupting influence, and the character of contemporary imperialism . . . instead of spreading a spirit of obsequiousness towards the bourgeois culture of the West" (*Pravda*, September 6th, 1946).

When Stalin decides that Molotov shall again come to a working agreement with the American Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, then Anna Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoschenko will perhaps again be found to have talent—if the unfortunates manage to survive the unexpected persecution of which they are now the victims.

This new wave of purgings has been accentuated since 1946 as a direct result of the increasing antagonism between Soviet Russia and the Western world. Those unfortunate writers who were not able to adapt themselves sufficiently quickly and devotedly to the new policy, and those who, although perhaps quick enough were nevertheless stamped indelibly by their past writings, were ruthlessly persecuted.

The Communist Party review, *Culture and Life*, seems to have filled the tumbrils. This time they carried Soviet literary stars of the first magnitude, such as Ilya Ehrenburg, Constantine Fedin and Alexander Makarov, all outlawed for not having sufficiently respected "the purity of Soviet art." Constantine Simonov found himself in the pillory for "ideological errors" because in his latest novel he made comparisons between the capitalist and Soviet worlds, "but failed to show sufficiently the advantages of our Socialist system over bourgeois society" (*Culture and Life*, January 12th, 1948). Even Alexander Fadeyev, President of the Union of Russian Writers, did not escape rebuke, for in his novel, *The Young Guard*, describing the story of the German occupation of a Russian village, he wrote "of the panic which seized the inhabitants without stressing that such panic was an exception" (*ibid.*). And "the praise which this novel met with was the fruit of the unhealthy policy

pursued in the Union of Writers," the same review informs us. As we might expect, the weekly organ of the Union of Russian Writers, hurries to confess humbly that "the principle of Bolshevik self-criticism has not always been practised with the requisite rigour by Soviet writers" (*Literaturnaya Gazieta*, January, 1948).

So the literary slogans at present in force in the Soviet Union are: war against "soulful vagueness, the sentiment of solitude, nostalgia, despair, individualism, voluptuous decadence and negative satire"; cheers for "fraternal enthusiasm and optimism in the literary assault for the success of the Fourth Five-Year Plan," and "Death to purulent and abstract romanticism; "Long live concrete and regenerative realism!" In short, Soviet writers must adopt a patriotic and moralizing style both hearty and austere, modelling themselves perhaps on the more Boy-Scoutish efforts of patriotic singers such as Kipling.

The Theatre, Film, Music, Painting and the "Formalist Sinners"

The three great masters of the Russian theatre, Stanislavsky, Tairov and Meyerhold, all of whom were famous before the Bolshevik Revolution, were able to stage productions under the relative liberalism of the N.E.P. period which were hailed by the whole world as brilliant and valuable contributions to dramatic art. With the First Five-Year Plan the ravages of political totalitarianism began. Actors were no longer chosen for their dramatic talent, but for their degree of orthodoxy. The theatrical repertoires became mere collections of the latest slogans. "Bio-mechanical" acrobatics were supposed "to reflect the tempo of industrialization." Classic works were mutilated and interpolated for the purpose of political demonstrations. "Every Soviet play running nowadays has always a scoundrelly White Russian officer, a nincompoop, a coward and a bully—in short anything you like provided he is evil, lazy and absolutely repulsive" (Dmitrievsky, p. 26).

The *Pravda* of June 28th, 1936, arrived at the following conclusion: "Left-Wing ugliness in Soviet opera derives from the same source as Left-Wing ugliness in poetry, education and science." Our readers will recall the misfortune which befell the Soviet writer, Demian Biedny, who missed the latest tack with regard to the doughty knights of Old Russia by about a quarter of an hour. Taken to task for having staged the "Trotskyizing" piece of Biedny, poor Tairov had to "recognize his errors" publicly, and enumerate them all one by one with a wealth of intimate detail. But "recognizing errors" is not always a safe bet, as witness the mishap which occurred to Keryentzov, President of the Arts Committee, who was accused by his censor, Agranov, of having "falsely charged himself with errors in order to falsify the perspective of his political

responsibility" (*Cahiers économiques et Sociaux*; Mark Vichniac, *Le Communisme et les valeurs spirituelles*).

The Soviet film, brilliant during the revolutionary period with such names as Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Dovshenko, suffered the same decline. During the war it seemed to have improved a little. Instead of propaganda pictures of a primitive and sectarian nature, the Soviet public was given the opportunity of appreciating one or two really artistic productions inspired by former classic achievements. However, the purge of August, 1946, did not spare the film world, and the resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of August 21st sternly reminded Soviet film producers that "they must remain faithful to the principles of Bolshevism in art."

Soviet music in particular suffered much during the attack against "formalism." The treble clef escaped by the skin of its teeth in the delirium of the extremists who hoped to replace it by the Marxist key. Musical accords were passed through the screen of political examinations.

"To think there are still people amongst us who secretly admire the works of the worst reactionary emigrant composers such as Stravinsky, with his *Symphony of Psalms*, impregnated with an orthodox and Catholic spirit!" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, February 14th, 1936).

The Soviet composer best known and most admired abroad, Shostakovitch, attracted the bolts of realism for his opera, *Catherine Izmailova*:

"That excess of subtlety could cost him dear. . . . The petty-bourgeois counter-revolutionary innovations lead to a detachment from authentic art" (*Pravda*, January 28th, 1936).

"The formalist sin of Shostakovitch is rooted in his isolation from the Soviet public. . . . The *Quiet Don* was perhaps a little weaker from the technical point of view . . . but it nevertheless had a well-defined social content" (*Izvestia*, February 27th, 1936).

Excited by the opportunity to tear a man to pieces, the campaign soared at one swoop to the heights of materialist dialectics, and the Communist cell at the Conservatoire was purged for "Right-Wing deviation," attested to by its musical sympathy for a conductor who was a disciple of Shostakovitch. After that the *Pravda* recovered its peace of mind:

"The year 1936 was a year of happiness on the musical front. Our articles on Shostakovitch exploded like petards and broke up the petrified bog of formalist lies, vanity and vulgar adaptation to petty-bourgeois tastes" (*Pravda*, February 13th, 1936).

The seismic resolution of the Central Committee of the Party of August 21st, 1946, also exploded a "musical bog," that of jazz. The celebrated band directed by Eddie Rozner was broken up for "vulgar complaisance to the false art of the West."

In February and April, 1948, a new storm burst over the heads of official Soviet composers, who were invited "to visit the great industrial centres, the *kolkhozes* and the workers' homes and get in touch with the people." After submitting to criticism by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which reproached him with "imitating bourgeois musicians," the Soviet composer Kachaturian promised "to make amends" (*Izvestia*, April 10th and 20th, 1948).

Painting had suffered relatively less from the sectarian and conservative politicalization of culture than the other branches of art, no doubt in order to keep sweet the advance-guard painters of the Paris school, which, with its master Picasso, is the pride of Western European Communist Parties. But at last that anomaly was wiped out too, and an offensive launched against petty-bourgeois deviations in Soviet painting. The offensive proceeded according to the three classic principles: a sudden storm of abuse against the representatives of the doctrines to be disgraced; the imposition, with fanfares, of the new orthodoxy; and the solemn ordination of the new spiritual (read: Secret Service) guides entrusted with the safe execution of the latest tack.

"The criticism made by Efros and Pounine against the painters Riepine and Sourikov, who are the pride of Russian art, and attempting perfidiously to rehabilitate cubist formalism and decadent surrealism divorced from life, has poisoned the conscience of Soviet youth. . . . Armed with the method of Socialist realism, defined generally by Comrade Stalin, the Soviet artist serves the interests of the people, and that is his main strength. . . . We should be impardonable if we, the contemporaries of the Stalinist epoch, did not represent with sufficient plenitude the images of our heroes. In no case may still life become a means for the artist to evade the themes of actuality. . . . Our artists must abandon the 'Picasso' rage" (A. Guerassinov in a series of articles published in the *Pravda* towards the end of July, 1947).

Thus those artists who had cunningly hoped to evade their patriotic Bolshevik duties by painting nothing but tomatoes and gherkins were happily unmasked, and the effects of the new tack on pictorial creation were not slow in showing themselves. To judge by the art-exhibition catalogues which have made their way abroad, nothing is now shown in Moscow's galleries but conventional works of a moralizing and edifying character in the same style as those which were popular under Hitler in Germany and under Napoleon in France. The dictators who pompously announce that it is their Heaven-sent mission to uproot history all show a very definite preference in the arts for traditionalism of the soothing syrup variety.

The Fate of the Exact Sciences

Under the Hitler régime, eminent German physicists sank low enough to write treatises on "Relativity De-Hebrewized," in artificial and synchronized hatred of the Jewish discoverer of the relativity theory, Einstein. The world indignantly condemned this incursion of political hatred into the realms of exact science, but, in fact, the Nazis were only copying methods of domestication adopted and pushed to still greater extremes by Stalinism long before they came to power.

"It is not at all necessary that a specialist in medicine should be a specialist in physics at the same time, or in botany, or inversely. But there is a science which all Bolsheviks must know absolutely on all fields of science, and that is Marxist-Leninist science" (Stalin, in a speech to the Eighteenth Party Congress on March 10th, 1939).

These words are stamped with the mealy-mouthed prudence which characterizes the Bolshevik dictator. In fact, Stalin's police insist that Soviet scientific workers should not merely learn Marxist-Leninism side by side with their own branch of scientific knowledge, but that they should trick out the latter with all the laws of the former.

In order that it should not fall into arrears with regard to industry, scientific research found itself saddled in 1931 with an All-Union Conference for permanent planification. Quite a defensible idea in itself, but in the dictatorial climate of Stalinism it received the following definition:

"The Conference recognizes the necessity for creating a Socialist collective organization of scientific research in order to effectuate the progressive acceleration of its tempo and a Socialist modernization of its methods, and to obtain a domestic reorganization of this work on the basis of dialectical materialism" (quoted by Membré, p. 62).

And the following is even plainer:

"Above all we must make an end of 'bourgeois objectivism' according to which science must not serve either practical needs or class interests, but be an end in itself. Our scientific work must uphold the principle of the superiority of the proletarian class and of the Communist Party. . . . We must fight against all deviations and uphold the General Line of the party" (*Bulletin* No. 1 of the Saratov Institute, 1932, under the editorship of Toulaiokoff).

"If he does not exploit the teachings of the party on the revolutionary class struggle, the scientist is condemned to fall back on the reactionary constructions of bourgeois science which denaturize the facts in a tendentious fashion, or to fall into empiricism without a future . . . and thus to be entrapped in the net of bourgeois ideology"

(Report of Professor Raudonikas, quoted by Aussey of the University of Riga in his book, *The Enslavement of the Spirit*).

Professor Raudonikas provides science with a nice pair of blinkers, one flap for its theoretical eye and the other for its practical eye, and thus equipped it can follow its nose straight ahead, avoiding both the bourgeois Charybdis and the Trotskyite Scylla, sailing along the glorious Stalinist fairway to success: "the dialectic of the synchronous machine," "the Socialist reconstruction of medicine," "Marxist fisheries," "the point of view of the Party in mathematics," "the purity of Marxist-Leninist theories in surgery"—alas! none of these quotations are invented; all are authentic and textual. The review "Under the Banner of Marxism" declares: "The theory of probabilities is completely the product of bourgeois economy" (*Pod Znamenem Marxizma*, November, 1936). Incidentally, that would do all honour to bourgeois economy by comparison with Soviet economy born of the theory of Stalinist infallibility. The same review waxes highly indignant in an article published in September, 1936, and signed Molodchi, that someone "dared to say at the Institute that mathematics have nothing to do with the social sciences," and it accuses the algebraist Louzine of "sabotage and irreverent observations."

Since March, 1937, the Soviet Academy of Science must submit its plan of work to the Council of People's Commissars, and alter and revise its drafts until "revolutionary vigilance and the illumination of the problems of Socialist construction" pass them as satisfactory. As for the official communications of the Academy, very often they consist of nothing but vulgar political denunciations such as the one published on May 26th, 1937, by the Academician Keller against the Institute of Genetics, charging it with "not waging the struggle against the class enemies and the underminers of the Bolshevik front." Professor Yilkin of the Institute of Sylviculture in Bryansk was accused of upholding counter-revolutionary theories on the exploitation of the nation's forests (*Izvestia*, February 12th, 1938). At Yaroslav a professor of biology was vehemently reproached on account of "the anti-Marxist deterioration of his biological courses" (*Outchitelskaya Gazieta*, March 25th, 1938). And a professor of mathematics—

"... deliberately deprived his lectures of all political content; in explaining the laws of pressure to his pupils, he directed them towards an abstract conception of the force of pressure, concealing the real significance of that force and its importance for Socialist construction. That sort of thing does not guarantee the Communist education of pupils" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, March 26th, 1938).

Professor Raudonikas has discovered traces of a bourgeois complot in philology:

"Up to the present we have no properly constituted Marxist

philology in conformity with the doctrines of Lenin; textbooks are still full of an assembly of reactionary theories, of bourgeois philological conceptions" (quoted by *E.I.A.* in September, 1938).

It is easy to imagine that historical science in the Soviet Union has suffered from most extraordinary and mystical extravagances:

"We Bolsheviks are of the opinion that in order to orientate ourselves in the flow of historic events, Leninism, which is the essential test, must serve us as an infallible compass" (Molotov, III, p. 61).

An even more difficult field has been conquered for Marxism, and we owe the good news to the Soviet Public Prosecutor Krylenko who enthusiastically informed a congress:

"We must make an end of neutrality in chess. We must once and for all condemn the formula 'chess for the sake of chess,' just as we have condemned the formula 'art for art's sake.' We must organize shock brigades of chess players, and set ourselves to carry out a Five-Year Plan for chess immediately."

The primacy of Marxist-Leninist dialectics over the whole field of human knowledge is always affirmed, but never proved. According to the prevailing rules of good tone in Communist circles, the claim must be made with sage nods of the head and received in respectful silence proper to the statement of a solemn truth inaccessible to bourgeois spirits.

We should not like to deprive our readers of one or two effects this dialectical materialism has had on the level of Soviet scientific knowledge. "On the front of chemistry," the *Shock Workers' Tribune* informs us with a squeal of triumph, "Our chemists are now producing synthetic rubber by breaking down old rubber galoshes" (*Krokodil*, No. 9, 1939). And easily going beyond the difficult transmutations by artificial radio-activity of Joliot-Curie, the *Bulletin* of the V.O.K.S. "condenses" quite naturally "helium into oxygen and azote," and the oxygen thus produced serves without more ado "to solve the problem of underground gasification of coal as left to us by Lenin" (*V.O.K.S. Bulletin* of March, 1939).

Let us conclude this part of our investigation with a quotation from the lecture of a Professor of the Institute for Training Personnel, Section for Communal Economy, whose job it is to train managers for the communal laundries:

"The principal raw material for a laundry is water. Proof: the process of production is nothing but the washing of clothes. The water is not the object of the washing; it unites with the dirt extracted from the clothes. However, these negative results of the application of water do not diminish the importance of its role as a principal raw material. The washing is at the same time a consumption good for whoever washes himself and a product of the functioning of washing considered as an enterprise" (*Izvestia*, January 20th, 1937).

Run to Earth, or Intellectuals brought to Bay

Decorated with sweet-smelling garlands if they bend the knee correctly, intellectuals in the Soviet Union are hunted down like wild beasts once the authorities take it into their heads to accuse them of "sabotage."

Professors are subjected to political examinations every year before a commission composed largely of Secret Service agents on the basis of a questionnaire drawn up in twenty sections. The fourteenth section is devoted to a detailed examination of all the heresies and deviations the examinee might have been guilty of in the past year, even in thought (*Encyclopædia Française*, Vol. XV, "*L'Enseignement en U.R.S.S.*"). The following is an example of this annual examination of teaching personnel:

"How long have you been a schoolmistress?"

"Twelve years."

"You come from a family of kulaks?"

"Why do you say that? We had in all six hens."

"How many of your relatives have been deprived of civic rights?"

"None at all."

"I do not believe you; you are hiding something."

The result was that of sixty teachers examined in this and like fashion, eleven were noted down as "politically unreliable" (*Outchitelskaya Gazieta*, March 1st, 1938).

In White Russia alone, writes the same journal, out of 32,000 schoolteachers 21,000 have been expelled, deprived of civic rights and of housing accommodation, or banished on accusations of the type shown above.

In 1930 the official slant in the Soviet Union was to despise "the sentimental bonds of maternity" and "the voice of blood," and the Academician Serebrovski therefore believed himself safely conformist in studying the possible extension of artificial insemination to the human race, but by 1936 voluntary abortion had been prohibited and "the family" restored in all its rights, with the result that a storm broke over the head of this "advance-guard geneticist":

"Comrade Serebrovski has said nothing in his report about the faults which have been discovered in his work on genetics. . . . Basing himself on the success of artificial insemination with animals, he proposes to employ the same methods to increase the population of the Soviet Union. It is a monstrous insult to the Soviet woman. And no matter how repentant Comrade Serebrovski may be now, the Soviet woman will never pardon him. The memory of that insult will outlive the memory of Serebrovski himself" (*Izvestia*, December, 1936).

A solemn session of the Academy adopted this standpoint with

the unanimous vote of all those present, including Serebrovski. At the same session the Academician Ipatiev (who had succeeded in escaping to London) was condemned in the following terms by his own son:

"I declare on my own behalf, and on that of my sister, that the conduct of my father, Vladimir Ipatiev, is unworthy of a member of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union and unworthy of a citizen of the Soviet Union. I was once proud to bear the name of my father. . . . Now I lower my head and seek to avoid having to mention it. We protest with all our energy against the conduct of our father" (*Izvestia*, December 29th, 1936).

This cruel rending of parents by their children is a characteristic feature of life in the "renewed" Soviet family. The children of Professor Yilkin were called to account "for having concealed the introduction by their father of pernicious theories into his lectures on silviculture" (*Izvestia*, February 12th, 1938).

Professor Tchiyeveski got into very hot water on account of an article he wrote in the *Encyclopédie Climatologique Française* contrasting the periods of maximum solar activity with periods of revolutionary mass activity:

"Tchiyeveski has sunk so low that he dares to call popular mass movements 'psychic epidemics.' . . . Is it permissible for a man who calls himself a Soviet scientist to publish counter-revolutionary articles of this nature in a foreign review in 1934? It is time to tear the mask from the face of a man who under the pretext of scientific discoveries really occupies himself with counter-revolutionary camouflage and propaganda" (*Pravda*, December 25th, 1935).

Even the Soviet paleographers are not safe from the persecutions of Soviet philistines. The works of Mme. Dobiacha Rojdistvenska, a member of the Soviet Academy, were "unmasked" because, in dealing with ancient Etruscan inscriptions, "she expressed a ferocious hatred of the Revolution and an ardent hope for the restoration of the old régime" (*Pravda*, quoted by *E.I.A.* in September, 1938).

When the war against Hitler placed the Soviet Government in the position of having to co-operate with capitalist powers—which were then suddenly declared democratic—Soviet economists had to refashion their theories to fit the new circumstances, and they granted a respite, based on scientific demonstration, to the capitalist régime, whose imminent death, based on equally scientific demonstration, they had announced just before. Professor Varga, Director of the Institute for World Politics and Economics in Moscow, evidently took account of the new requirements, and in his book, *Capitalist Economy after the War*, he declared that the crisis which this time would definitely undermine bourgeois economy would not break out for another ten years. However, by 1948 it no longer

suited the Soviet Government, which was already conducting a new aggressive policy, to be told that the capitalist system still clings tenaciously to life, and so Varga, one of the most eminent and highly praised lights of Bolshevism, was called to judgment, insulted left and right, and deprived of his post (*Bolshevik*, September, 1947, and *Pravda*, end of January, 1948). And in order that the old Bolshevik tradition should not be broken, his judges, i.e. the twenty experts entrusted with his excommunication, were themselves soon condemned in their turn.

Some Soviet intellectuals have been fortunate enough to make their escape from the Soviet Union, including the chemists Tschibabine and Ipatiev, the mathematician Gamov and the author Zamyatine. All of them have published concurring revelations on the intolerable moral, intellectual and even physical servitude of science and culture in the Soviet Union. On the endless lists of those shot, or those who died in camps are such well-known names as those of the philosopher Riazanov; the historians Platonov, Egorov, and Boutenko; the doctors Levine, Kasarov, and Ivashiev; the physicists and chemists Riazantziev, Karatyguine, Killi and Lazarev; the astronomer Voronov (who was proudly described as "the Soviet Kepler" before he was disgraced and imprisoned); the poet Jurenev; the archæologists Likatcheff and Riexieiev; the lawyers Reissier and Patchoukanis; etc., etc. And in addition there is the long list of those who committed suicide, which includes the names of Essenine, Kuznietzoff, Mayakovsky, André Sobol and Vladimir Piast. And then there are others, still alive, but leading a degraded, miserable and uncertain life, never knowing where they will find themselves next: in prison, against the wall, in the public confessional or once again in favour; including men like Babel, Pilniak, Deborine and Ehrenburg, Shostakovitch, Kapitza, Ossinski. The men named are, or were, the stars of Soviet intellectual and scientific life. In addition, there are a great number of intellectuals and scientists of secondary importance, whose names are lesser known or unknown. They are imprisoned, deprived of all rights, publicly condemned, pardoned, shot, and sent to camps on the same scale as all other groups of citizens in this country of socialist advance-guard culture.

Soviet "Libraries"

But in the Soviet Union there are, after all, 55,000 libraries containing no less than 105,000,000 books. That saves the cultural face of the régime—or does it?

Who wrote the books? Stalin for sure, 100,000 times each line; and those who copy him, popularize him and fawn on him for their existence. But there is nothing in these libraries written by Right-Wing deviationists, or Left-Wing deviationists, or semi-Right, or

semi-Left; nothing written by bourgeois or petty-bourgeois authors; nothing written by overt or covert enemies of the régime, or by the "socially unreliable" elements, or by "the unmasked wreckers," or by those "who lack a social sense," or by "reactionaries," or by those who do not understand, or, in fact, by anyone else at all. In short, there is absolutely nothing there which might instruct the inquiring reader or broaden his mind.

The problem is obviously to keep books faithfully up to the level of the latest developments of thought. Each time Stalin changes his collaborators the *Soviet Encyclopædia* has to change its definitions. Irreproachably considered as a scientific principle, its execution is faced with many thorny technical difficulties on account of the frequency and thoroughness of the changes. The deletions, additions, commentaries, warnings, cuts and falsifications rapidly render the text illegible. And then nothing else remains but to pulp the whole edition. Such has been the fate of volume after volume of the *Soviet Encyclopædia*, and even of complete editions of the works of Lenin, for the master has often spoken favourably of the renegade Trotsky. Like certain monks in the Middle Ages, Marxist librarians correct their "Bible":

"We burn more books than the Nazis do, I thought, and more Marxists authors. . . . Soviet librarians are under closer surveillance, and are more threatened, than most other Soviet citizens. . . . Purges go on ceaselessly. . . . A collection of official newspapers and journals of the preceding year becomes forbidden literature. Dare a librarian refuse an inquirer permission to consult a copy of the *Izvestia* of the preceding year? Would they accuse him of sabotage? But that file of newspapers contains articles signed by authors since denounced as enemies of the people. If the librarian allows an applicant to look through them, will he not make himself liable to a charge of counter-revolutionary activity? And if he puts the question to his superiors, might they not suspect him of laying a trap for them?" (Barmine, p. 363).

The newspaper *Sovietskaya Sibir* of August 2nd, 1937, shows us how real the dilemma is. The sight of the Regional Library in Talmen (Western Siberia) almost takes its breath away:

"Up to the present moment, the works of enemies of the people such as Radek and other Trotskyite bandits are still in the library catalogue. On the table in the reading-room was the work of the Trotskyite Voronsky and of a number of others unsuitable to a Soviet library. Thus this library has been transformed into a centre of enemy propaganda."

The *Uralski Rabotchi* of August 4th, 1937, is just as virtuously and socialistically indignant:

"The library of the sanatorium at Kuria is packed full of counter-revolutionary literature. We do not know whether that is due to

lack of culture on the part of the librarian or to other and graver causes."

So the flames of the literary bonfire lick up lugubriously again. After having been banished from the world for centuries *autos-da-fé* throw a flickering light over the lands of sadness and shame which run from Trier to Vladivostok to revenge the despot with the torch of the executioner. But the voice of Shakespeare still sounds through the centuries:

*"It is a heretic which makes the fire,
Not she which burns in't."*

The Reigning Ideology in a Nut-shell

At the back of all the interdictions and injunctions alternating on the same theme, all in the same warning tone, behind the ecstatic and hate-filled vociferations, behind the experiments, the constant chopping and changing and the rattle of shots, certain notions persist, and they may be considered as forming the permanent basis of what, for want of a more appropriate expression, we must call Soviet culture.

The intangible basis of its philosophy is dialectical materialism. Hegel declared that the idea evolves simultaneously in the form of thesis and antithesis, and that the opposition of these two permits the creation, by a synthesis of the contradictions, of a new and higher idea. Marx and Engels adopted this "dialectic" without modifying its content, but they changed its purpose: instead of applying it to the idea, they applied it to matter. This process they described as "setting dialectics on its feet again." The notion of "contraries," already hazy enough in the sphere of abstract ideas, could not be extended to the natural world except at the price of a great deal of verbal jugglery. In Marxist dialectics the revolution is the synthesis of the conflict between the "position" of the bourgeoisie and the "negation" of the proletariat, but in Marxist propaganda the synthesis is represented by the victory of the proletariat alone, a victory which takes good care not to split again into two new contraries.

These metaphysical difficulties caused the conciliation attempted by Marx between materialism and idealistic dialectics to fall into a discreet desuetude in the Socialist movement. The Bolsheviks have disinterred it and raised it to high honour for the sole and simple reason that it provides them with an admirable escape from all the difficulties of logical justification. As soon as two Soviet theories are denounced by a critic as contradictory, Marxist dialectics are hurried into the breach to explain sagely that the contradiction represents a superior synthesis in dynamic gestation. Consider, for instance, the contradiction pointed out by the

"idealistic logicians" between the alleged 99.99 per cent. approval of the Soviet electorate and the 100 per cent. persistence of the terror; the facile reply is that Soviet democracy is a dialectical synthesis between the spontaneous enthusiasm of the masses and the organized vigilance of the Secret Police.

Sociology, history, political economy and law have still another supporting pillar, "historical materialism," or "Histmat." According to this Marxist doctrine the legal relations and moral ideas of a society are "reflections" of the economic relations between its classes, or "the superstructure" of the productive forces. Having refused to tolerate the restoration of private property in the means of production, distribution and exchange, and having for the rest developed industry to "colossal" proportions, Stalin declares himself and his régime a reflection of these infrastructural conditions in the mirror of economic determinism, and proclaims in consequence that his régime cannot be anything but Socialist.

The mirror in question is responsible for a grave omission of the human factor, and for the degradation of the ideal of emancipation into a programme of pure Stateism. However, it cannot be denied that Marx and his followers applied correctives to the theory, and sought to render it more supple in an attempt to reconcile it with the primacy of the libertarian aspirations of the individual. In consequence, the first care of Stalin is to stigmatize such correctives and such suppleness as "reformist" and to desiccate Marx's thought, reducing it to a naïve and pedantic cut-and-dried scheme. It is only at such a price, and with a deal of legerdemain thrown in for good measure, that Stalin and his régime can exploit Marxist "historical materialism" to justify their claim to the banner they have usurped.

Industrialization has taken chief place in the Olympus of Stalinist idols. Man, already denied by the revolution which was to raise him up, was subsequently crushed by the auxiliary which was to serve him, the machine. The Stalinist régime despises art for art's sake, but it worships concrete for the sake of concrete, and thence, art for the sake of concrete. Despite its modernist apparatus, Soviet industrialization is nothing but a god-Moloch which places all morality in the service of individual despoliation. Life continues to be a redemption by suffering, and paradise, although now descended to earth, continues to be prohibited to the living generation. The Soviet "hero" is a rough, simple puritan who sacrifices well-being to edification, love to labour, and dreams to the service of the party.

And, finally, let us not forget the bloody grasp of the terror. The dogma of the unanimity of the party has its counterpart in the degeneracy of all opponents into "perfidious traitors" who insert themselves secretly into the body social to destroy its political

health by the evil spells of sabotage. It is obvious that we are faced here with a resurrection of the old myth of the Devil, and why, therefore, should it be surprising that the witch-hunt after all oppositional tendencies revives the procedure of the Holy Inquisition, amplified with modern technique and combined with the preventive chimeras of propaganda?

To sum up, what has to serve poor Russia in place of a culture is a mishmash whose formula reads something like this:

Ten parts varied lunacy in the daily service of the Government.

Ten parts residual Marxism turned into a "historical dialectical materialist" religion for the idolization of the State.

Ten parts Fascist discipline and militarism.

Ten parts chauvinist patriotism.

Ten parts labour sanctification, sacrifice and productivism.

Ten parts idealization of cruelty.

All that well mixed with forty parts of holy water for sprinkling over Stalin to form a whole.

The ultimate excuse of the defenders of Stalinism is to appeal to the past. Russia, they say, is emerging from barbarism; however modest the progress, the fact is that the Bolsheviks have succeeded in raising her above the level of Czarism.

In opposing this latter assertion, we know in advance that we are giving hostages to our opponents, who will hasten to use intellectual simplification and to exploit political passion to misrepresent us as defenders of the Czar. If we declare that the old Russian régime was better than the present Stalinist régime, meaning thereby that it was less bad, and specifying that, though it deserved its death, it did not deserve its successor, then we shall obviously and unpardonably have taken sides with Nicholas II against Stalin! And the fact that our assertion can be proved, the fact that it is true, will not be granted us as an extenuating circumstance. It will be manifest that we have written these pages only in the hope of rehabilitating the Ochrana.

Well, what does it matter? Was it ever possible to demonstrate anything at all to those under the double domination of sophistry and bad faith? Let us therefore say what we have to say without regard to those who wait in ambush with ulterior motives. And what we have to say is both pertinent and true:

Despite all its blemishes, Czarism made it possible, in good times and in bad, for a whole brilliant galaxy of scientists, writers and artists to live and work, and create an important contribution to the treasury of human thought. From Lermontov to Tolstoy, from Pushkin to Dostoevsky, from Gogol to Chekhov, to cite only

literature, the eternal sigh of mankind, made up of insatiable aspirations to liberty, of battles between egoism and fraternity, of conflicts of conscience and desire, found interpreters whose words made the hearts of all ages and all conditions beat higher everywhere. True, they were all in constant opposition to authority, and the persecutions of Czarism were no feeble pretence—nevertheless, Tolstoy died of old age in Yasnaya-Polyana without ever having had to retract a single line of all he wrote.

Throughout the twenty years of Stalin's reign in Russia not a breath has come from that great prison which might have warmed and comforted any free spirit anywhere in the world.

The G.P.U. has succeeded where the Ochrana failed.

It has destroyed and dishonoured Russian culture.

THE TERROR

"Stupid cruelties committed by frightened men."—Friedrich Engels.

ON DECEMBER 20TH, 1947, the inhabitants of the Soviet Union awoke to the sound of a mighty hosanna such as no people in world history had ever heard before. The 10,000 organs of the Soviet daily Press resounded one and all to dithyrambs of praise for the Soviet Secret Police, founded thirty years before as the Extraordinary Commission for Combating the Counter-Revolution, and known commonly by the Russian initials of its name, Tcheka. And all the ecstatic articles were significantly crowned by a new decree against spies and for the repression of sabotage.

The indecent official apologia for an organization devoted to denunciation, spying and murder is sufficient proof that the Stalinist terror cannot be considered as a passing outburst of revolutionary violence. It is not a fortuitous malady existing on the periphery of everyday life. It is nothing less than the form of life of a whole people; it is the permanent and fundamental instrument of Soviet authority; it is the bloody system of the whole régime.

For endless years a great multitude of weary shadows have been hunted from pillar to post without respite, without succour, without hope—and without arousing the interest of a civilized world without curiosity. And when they were murdered without trial it was to the sound of hosannas from the deceived democrats of the outside world.

It was not enough that for ten years of Nazi tyranny the civilized world let millions of tortured men and women gasp out their last breath in the slaughter camps and in the gas chambers of Hitler Germany. That we turned our eyes from the truth for ten years was not shame enough, it seems. Must it begin all over again now? Is the conscience of the civilized world to evade the problem by putting down all the revelations of Stalinist atrocities to alleged anti-Soviet intrigues? Must political myths always be permitted to glorify tyrants and ignore their victims? Must silence always hush up the work of the hangman?

The Terror in Action

No sphere of human life in the Soviet Union, not even affairs of sentiment, is outside the scope of official vigilance.

"A young Communist girl of Kronstadt, having promised to go out with a young man, informed him when he came to the meeting

place that she was otherwise engaged. Her action was the object of a public debate, at the end of which the girl was rebuked" (*Pravda*, April 17th, 1937; another case in the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, January 21st, 1938).

A girl student of the Communist High School was compelled to divorce her husband because he had been "unmasked as the author of anti-Soviet utterances" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, March 15th, 1938). A secretary of the "Komsomol" checks up on the love affairs of the young people in his organization in order to make sure they have regard to the proper interests of the party. When he believes that such is not the case, a stern order goes forth: "The affair must be discontinued at once" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, March 30th, 1938).

And to crown the edifice of Bolshevik dictatorship in affairs of the heart, the Presidium of the Soviet Supreme Council has now promulgated a law prohibiting marriages between Soviet citizens and foreigners (*Official Soviet Gazette*, March 21st, 1947). This new law brooks of no exception whatever in favour of diplomats, sailors or proletarians, who, according to *The Communist Manifesto*, whose hundredth anniversary has just been celebrated with such a flourish of Communist trumpets, have no fatherland. Once again there is no parallel to this intervention of the State in the private life of its citizens in history except Hitler's notorious Nuremberg Laws prohibiting marriage between Aryans and Jews.

The Secret Police will have no peace until the day when each Soviet citizen is guarded by his own sentry—and that day seems approaching. All witnesses have been struck by the strict watch kept on all "Socialist property." At both ends of each bridge, on each platform of each station, at all level crossings, at the doors of all public buildings, gleam the bayonets of the special sections. At every few paces the pedestrian is faced with a warning notice, barbed wire and a sentry: "Entry forbidden," "Passports ready," "Apply for permission to enter," "All visitors must be accompanied by an escort," "All visitors will be searched," and so on. You are not, as you might think, approaching secret military strong points, but a food depot, or building yards, or a garage, or a pig-breeding establishment. Armed pickets patrol the mines, the factories and the workshops, and sum you up through barred peep-holes. They are all under the Secret Police seconded by the "secret committees" operating in all factories, etc.

"Mounting guard has become a symbol of the Soviet system. Everyone on guard has a rifle, even if he is guarding a field of potatoes. . . . From one end of the country to the other there is nothing but guarded zones with orders to stop, keep out, go on, and with men armed with rifles. It represents a curious aspect of the march towards Communism" (Miliero, p. 234).

The Five-Year Plan inaugurated industrialization by forging mediæval shackles to keep the worker in the factory and the peasant on the soil—or to get rid of either at the will of the State.

Workers are forbidden to leave the factories at their own free will, and those who nevertheless do so are branded as "labour deserters" and are liable to punishments up to ten years forced labour in pursuance of decrees promulgated on September 24th, 1930, and June 26th and August 10th, 1940. A decree of October 11th, 1930, renewed in January 1941, orders workers to accept any work allotted to them anywhere.

All employees of transport and industry have to be provided by law with a "labour book," and all punishments and dismissals, with the reasons, are entered in it in pursuance of a decree published on November 12th, 1931.

Workers are forbidden to absent themselves from their employment without reasonable cause, and one absence, or three late arrivals within a month, are sufficient to justify dismissal, which involves the withdrawal of the labour-union ticket and the loss of housing accommodation (decree of December 16th, 1932, and June 26th, 1940).

Students of technical schools are informed that they must present themselves at the place of work assigned to them six months before the end of their studies (decree of July 29th, 1936).

The use of the labour book is strictly enjoined on all workers. All particulars regarding the holder must be scrupulously entered. The loss of a labour book is punishable by a fine of 25 roubles (decree of December 20th, 1938).

The transfer of members of *kolkhozes* in regions considered over-populated to under-populated regions is quite common. Such migrations have affected 105,000 families in the Ukraine, 90,000 families in White Russia, 80,000 families in the Smolensk Region, and so on (decrees of May 27th, 1939, and June 15th, 1939).

The serfs of the nineteenth century in Russia, before their liberation under Alexander II, were referred to as "baptized cattle." Baptism has disappeared in the Soviet Union, but peasants still have the status of "cattle" which has now been extended to workers and students as well.

Whilst Moscow was resounding with hosannas in praise of collectivization, the Council of People's Commissars discreetly reintroduced the old Czarist institution of "Domestic Passports." All progressive elements condemned this oppressive institution under Czarism, and it was abolished by the 1917 Revolution "as a police instrument for the oppression of the masses" (*The Smaller Soviet Encyclopædia*).

No citizen of the Soviet Union may now leave his own district,

take a train, put up at an hotel, or absent himself from his place of domicile for more than twenty-four hours without obtaining the necessary permission in the form of visas on his domestic passport. This domestic passport is issued by a special office of the Secret Police in every factory and every *kolkhoze*. Citizens found without such a passport are liable to severe punishments, and subsequent offenders are liable to be shot. This passport contains a detailed description of the holder, and, in addition, an account of his economic, political and private life; his ancestors to the second degree, together with an indication of their class affiliations and their social activities; the members of his own family, and whatever of importance may have happened to them on the front of Socialist construction; his divorces, if any; the number of times he has been dismissed from his job and the reasons; the organizations to which he belongs; his decorations, if any; his political history; and the amounts and dates of his "voluntary" subscriptions to the State loans.

The reinstitution of the old domestic passport aimed at something more than enhancing the slavery of the inhabitants; it also permits the authorities to drive the "useless mouths" out of the towns, the miserable wretches who are "politically compromised," those whom the *Pravda* refers to as "rotten vermin and social parasites." More than half a million of such undesirables were subsequently expelled from Moscow and sent roaming through the land in search of a crust of bread and a roof over their heads. After that, the Soviet authorities launched a virulent campaign against the "migrators" and the "vagabonds."

Naturally, it was not enough to place the greatest possible obstacles in the way of those citizens who might want to move about at their own free will from province to province; above all, they must be prevented from going abroad. A decree promulgated on June 6th, 1934, made "flight abroad"—that is to say, what in other countries would be called "unauthorized emigration"—punishable by death, or by ten years' forced labour "in the event of extenuating circumstances." This decree was no special measure but is permanently applicable both in times of war and peace, and it applies to all persons, whether civil or military.

As for permission to go abroad, any Soviet citizen is perfectly free to apply for it. All he has to do is to send in his application accompanied by a statement of the reasons for his desire to leave the Soviet Union and a fee amounting to about fifty days' wages. Some months later he will receive an official intimation to the effect that his application has been refused, together with four-fiftieths of the fee he has paid—and the knowledge that there is one more unfavourable entry in his G.P.U. dossier. Permission to leave the Soviet Union is refused even to Soviet women who have

married foreigners, technicians or diplomats, and more recently, Allied soldiers, and wish to leave with them to make their homes abroad. It is also refused to relations of those revolutionaries who left Russia during "the Czarist prison period." Sometimes Soviet citizens have to be let out for various indispensable purposes—for instance, sailors, engineers on economic missions, diplomats, and so on. Such people are chosen from amongst those who have families. Their nearest and dearest are left behind in the Soviet Union, and they themselves are kept under the closest watch, and if necessary they are executed on the spot by the agents of the much-feared foreign section of the Secret Service.

A wide zone along all the frontiers of the Soviet Union is closed to all citizens with the exception of those provided with a special passport (*Molot*, January 27th, 1938).

"When you look at the immense plain which stretches out before you along the bank of the Dniester you feel almost as though you were looking at a country of the dead. There is no one to be seen apart from a few soldiers. The ordinary civilian population is not permitted to approach the bank of the river. However, all who have the slightest chance attempt to cross the Dniester by swimming. . . . More than 80 per cent. of them perish at the hands of the Red Soldiers on guard" (*Indépendant*, February 12th, 1938).

Despite this "Stalin Line," innumerable opponents of the Soviet régime have no other thought day and night than to escape from their country. In a poignant book entitled *A Russian finds His Country Again*, Boris Wartanoff describes the fears and the struggles of those Russians who are unwilling to be suffocated in Stalin's great prison. Constant patrols, mounted and on foot, police dogs, look-outs on special observation towers, searchlights which sweep the countryside at night, and "peaceable citizens"—that is to say, members of the frontier *kolkhozes* too hungry to consider the perfidy of their action—remorselessly hunt down the fugitives, and yet the attempts never cease; men with bare feet, chilled bones and ulcerated hearts that still hold hope, crawl forward tenaciously towards the barrier, rise and advance, fall to the ground and rise again, fascinated by the idea of liberty. This type of Soviet man-hunt is officially encouraged with all the resources of Soviet propaganda:

"The instances of heroism by our Soviet youth in the frontier districts are innumerable; young people, spying out bands of smugglers and violators of the frontiers, succeed in seizing them and taking them to military posts" (*V.O.K.S. Bulletin*, March, 1939).

The names of heroes rewarded for having delivered up "violators of the frontiers" are published side by side with the names of those who have "outstripped scientific norms," and they are almost as

numerous. Where children are concerned they are rewarded with toys, sums of money and diplomas of honour. The *Tikhookeanskaya Komsomoletz* often publishes pictures of these man-hunters in ringlets and short trousers, and mentions the rewards they have received per head for captured fugitives, something like the rewards paid to children in happier countries for killing, say, adders.

"Children are guarding cattle near the frontier. Suddenly they observe two strangers who are stealthily making their way through the corn. Immediately one of the children sends off others to run to the posts of the frontier guards whilst he himself talks to the strangers. This gives the frontier guards, thus warned by the children, time to encircle the strangers. Observing themselves discovered, the strangers open fire on the soldiers. During the shooting, one of the fugitives is killed and the other captured alive. The children who assist in the arrest of this violator of the frontiers receive a reward of 1,000 roubles" (*Pravda*, August 23rd, 1937).

Such attempts to escape are not isolated incidents. The whole 10,000-mile Soviet frontier is the scene of constant attempts by desperate men to make their way to freedom, and this fact is confirmed by the following figures published in connection with the anniversary celebrations of the foundation of the Soviet Frontier Guard Force:

"During the course of these twelve years one unit of the Frontier Guard alone has captured 31,019 violators of the frontier, 384 spies, ninety-seven diversionists and 9,619 smugglers" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, October 7th, 1937).

These figures are eloquent. Their magnitude was confirmed *a posteriori* by mass desertions from the Red Army during the chaos which supervened at the end of the war and gave rise to a new "Russian emigration." Soviet territory is little less than one huge concentration camp. The inhabitants of the Soviet Union are again living in the enforced national and local isolation imposed by Czarism in the seventeenth century. Fettered to the soil and the factory, undernourished, and greeted with fusillades if they dare to approach the frontiers of their own country, they represent 160,000,000 convicts guarded by 10,000,000 armed warders.

The Infamies of the Law

In our Introduction we said that it was astonishing that investigators of "the Russian enigma" had made so little use of documents as illuminating as the text of certain Soviet laws. The text of six Soviet decrees provides the observer with a summary and devastating picture of the whole régime.

The death sentence was abolished for criminal offences even under Czarism, and it was then abolished for political and military offences by the Russian March Revolution. Kerensky reintroduced

it for serious military offences at the front, to the great and vociferous indignation of the Bolsheviks, who abolished it again—for a few weeks—as soon as they came to power. Under Stalin's régime the death sentence and its execution have taken on a magnitude equal to the worst Hitlerian massacres.

Out of twenty-seven paragraphs of a law referring to "counter-revolutionary crimes against the State and offences against the established order" promulgated on January 25th, 1927, nineteen of them provide for the death sentence (*Izvestia*, February 27th, 1927). By virtue—if that is the word—of these paragraphs, and in the absence of constitutional or legal guarantees, anyone can be sentenced to death for anything without the opportunity of defence, without being able to cite witnesses, without the right of defence by a lawyer and without the right of appeal. And this in times of peace ten years after the Russian Revolution.

But even this all-embracing power over the lives and liberties of the subject was not enough to satisfy the Soviet authorities, and the death sentence was then officially introduced for robbery and larceny. According to a decree of August 7th, 1932, published in full the following day in the *Izvestia*:

"The Central Executive Committee of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union consider that public property (of the State, the *kolkhozes* and the Co-operatives) is sacred and inviolable, and that persons who offend against it must be considered as enemies of the people. . . ."

The "property of the State" includes all goods in transport by rail or water, and all the belongings of the *kolkhozes* and the co-operatives (standing crops, cattle, stores, etc.). The theft of any of this class of State property is punishable by "the supreme measure of social defence," which is a mealy-mouthed circumlocution for the death sentence, and which is accompanied by the confiscation of all the offender's possessions, or, if extenuating circumstances are recognized, by not less than ten years' forced labour, with the confiscation of all the offender's possessions. Such offences are automatically excluded from any amnesty.

This decree was directed in particular against famished peasants who pillaged grain and other foodstuffs, and against undernourished sailors and railwaymen pilfering foodstuffs *en route*.

From one or two allusions made publicly by the notorious Soviet Public Prosecutor Vishinsky it is clear that tens of thousands of such poor wretches have been executed in pursuance of this decree. The fields of standing crops were placed in a state of siege, kept under observation by reconnaissance planes, and constantly patrolled by armed guards on horseback.

"During the night of July 22nd the ears were stolen from about twenty sheaves of wheat in the Stalinsky *kolkhoze* in the Novosposky

District. The thieves profited by the negligence of the President of the *kolkhoze*, Liakhova, who did not think it necessary to place guards in the fields" (*Volgaskaya Kommuna*, August 1st, 1937).

After twenty years of Soviet power and a "Socialist" régime, guards are still necessary to protect the harvest and prevent theft and unauthorized gleaning. The *Pravda* of April 28th, 1934, reports a number of condemnations:

"Paraskeva, Elek, twenty-eight years old, mother of three children, a member of the *kolkhoze*. Pachtenko, Anna, forty years old, an illiterate member of the *kolkhoze*. Both condemned to ten years' imprisonment for having stolen nine pounds of grain. Against the protest of the Public Prosecutor, the court of appeal reduced the sentence and replaced it under another law by one year's forced labour."

The following examples taken from the *Digest of Soviet Justice* show in what an arbitrary fashion the decree is often applied:

"For having used property belonging to the *kolkhoze* without permission (having used a horse, and a boat for fishing) the Tribunal applied the decree of August 7th, 1932, and passed the death sentence. For having thrown a stone at a piglet, an act described in the indictment as 'having prejudiced the livestock of the *kolkhoze*,' the Tribunal applied the Decree of August 7th and passed sentence of death."

The threat of death, propaganda and "Socialist reprobation" all combined were obviously insufficient to prevent the hungry peasants, who faced death by starvation during the 1933 famine, from stealing food. Socialist doctrine contends, not without some justification, that "criminality is the fruit of a still barbarous social system," but they take good care not to teach things like that in Soviet schools. In reply to some parents who had timidly protested against the use of violent language in books intended for children, the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of January 27th, 1936, declared:

"Brigands, monsters, mongrels. . . . How can one demand that such words should be deleted from our books? How otherwise should we speak to the infant members of the *kolkhozes* of those people who steal the products of the harvest?"

The death sentence has also been introduced for indiscipline in the transport services. Even in connection with the most terrible rail disasters in France the Communist *Humanité* will never brook the slightest suggestion that a railway employee might have been at fault, and if the charge is made, then it immediately represents the railwayman in question as a proletarian martyr, and launches a fierce campaign against the capitalist companies, which, it declares, are solely responsible. It is altogether a different story in the Soviet Union, and the "Driver of the Locomotive of History" makes the drivers of his prehistoric locomotives responsible for the

slightest accident. According to the first paragraph of a decree promulgated on January 23rd, 1931:

"Any violation of labour discipline in the transportation services in punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding ten years if it causes, or is liable to cause, damage or destruction to rolling stock, permanent way or buildings, or bodily harm to persons, or delay in the departure of trains or boats, or traffic congestion, or the holding up of trains or boats, and all other happenings liable to hinder the carrying out of the official transport plans, or to prejudice the punctuality or security of transport. In cases where such criminal acts are committed with malice aforethought, they involve the supreme measure of social defence [i.e. death], followed by the confiscation of all the property of the convicted offender" (*Izvestia*, January 25th, 1931).

"Every violation of labour discipline in the transport services"—that is to say, the least error in working, or even a suspicion of an error—can bring down the death sentence on the culprit, and he has no legal channel whatever through which he could defend himself against a charge of malice aforethought. In this way a locomotive driver named Kondrachev was condemned to death in pursuance of the decree following on the derailment of his train (*l'Humanité*, March 7th, 1933). Another locomotive driver named Nozdrine was held responsible for a collision in which his goods train was involved because he had overrun a signal. He was treated as a "White Guard" and executed (*Izvestia*, November 10th, 1935). Incidentally, the newspaper reported the accident, the trial, the conviction and the execution all in the same breath. In this case there were no deaths or even injuries, only damaged trucks. On October 8th, 1935, an airman named Aresiev was shot for having had three accidents in which material damage was caused.

Proof that the organizational vices of the Russian railway system are the real cause of all these accidents is the fact that not all the blood shed so liberally has availed in the least, for since the promulgation of this savage decree railway accidents in the Soviet Union have been on the increase.

Sentence of death is the punishment for attempts to escape abroad. We know already from the decree of June 6th, 1934, that it is a capital crime for any Russian, whether civilian or military person, to want to leave his country. Paragraph 3 of this same decree contains a provision such as has not appeared in any system of jurisprudence since the Dark Ages:

"In case of flight abroad by a military person, the adult members of his family, should they have assisted in the preparation or the accomplishment of the treason, or should they merely have known of it and not denounced it to the authorities, shall be punished with from five to ten years' imprisonment, and with the confiscation

of all their possessions. The other members of the family of the traitor living with him, or at his charge, at the time of the treason shall be deprived of all electoral rights and deported for five years to the far regions of Siberia."

The easy, indirect, effective and horribly infamous method of taking hostages has always been a favourite with the G.P.U. It makes physical torture unnecessary, it leaves no trace on the body of the victim, but fills his heart with remorse. It is now officially codified as the law of the Soviet Union.

In a speech published in the *Izvestia* of February 12th, 1936, Krylenko declared: "This law was adopted at the direct initiative of the greatest leader of the workers, Comrade Stalin." It was thus thanks to the Great Father of the Peoples that the sailor Voronkov of the Soviet warship *Marat* was sentenced to death for having tried to leave the country, and his children sent to Siberia "for unconscious complicity" (*Le Temps*, November 7th, 1934). It was thanks to the ineffable goodness of the same genius that the sailor Kovalenkov was shot for having unsuccessfully attempted to desert his ship, whilst two of his fellow sailors were sentenced to ten years' imprisonment each "for not having denounced his intention to the authorities" (*Izvestia*, November 23rd, 1934). A Frenchwoman of our acquaintance, a naturalized Russian, having stayed in France beyond the limit of her permit, afterwards learned that her daughter, aged fifteen years, had been "sentenced" to forced labour on the Moscow underground railway.

The sentence of death has also been introduced for the suppression of juvenile delinquency. Certain of our readers may have doubted our statement concerning the rapid increase of juvenile delinquency, and in particular highway robbery, in the Soviet Union, despite the details we gave. It is easy enough, they may have thought, to create a totally false impression by bringing together in a single paragraph cases taken from a decade in the life of 170,000,000 people. Perhaps—but there is an official document which settles the question beyond all doubt; it is the decree of April 7th, 1935. This decree provides that all children from the age of twelve years accused of robbery with violence, causing grievous bodily harm, committing murder or attempted murder shall be brought before the criminal courts and be liable to all the punishments provided by the penal code for adults convicted of the same crimes (*Izvestia*, April 8th, 1935). Thus the degeneration of innumerable juveniles in the Soviet Union, so hotly denied by Soviet propaganda, is officially admitted by decree. And at the same time it reveals a degeneration of Soviet society more terrible than ever: the abandonment of all ideals of re-education and the return to methods of political repression, even extermination.

Further, by the terms of this decree, itself without precedent in

the legislation of any country, juveniles from the age of twelve years on who are neither robbers nor murderers can still fall victim to the articles punishing labour indiscipline and attempts to escape from the country by the death sentence. Before finishing with this legal barrage against juveniles in the Soviet Union, let us quote the fashion in which a French teacher of the Sarthe Department seeks to justify this measure, for the blindness of zealous Stalinists abroad goes even as far as that:

"The bourgeois legal system keeps a man an infant until his twenty-first year. The Soviet legal system, on the other hand, makes the individual fully responsible, and a major, at the age of twelve" (*Ecole Emancipée*, November 15th, 1935, Report of the Congress of the Fédération Unitaire de l'Enseignement).

One asks oneself how it comes about that a régime which succeeds in making a child of twelve years into a fully responsible individual, and a major in the eyes of the law, is unable to prevent such precocious children becoming murderers.

And the list of the law's infamies in the Soviet Union is an ever longer one.

The punishment for the hoarding of money or specie is death.

The punishment for acts of sabotage is death. Any miscalculation by a worker can be construed as sabotage, and one of the favourite tricks of the G.P.U., if they want to break an innocent man's neck, is to involve him in some invented case of sabotage.

The punishment for the poor execution of agricultural work, for the illegal slaughter of cattle, for negligence in ploughing or sowing, for the stealing of material, for neglect in the proper care of horses (supplement to the decree of August 7th, 1932, published in 1933) is death.

The punishment for striking in the service of the State is death (*Izvestia*, January 31st, 1932).

But on May 27th, 1947, a decree was promulgated abolishing the death sentence in the Soviet Union. Soviet judges can now pass a maximum sentence of twenty years' imprisonment only. Alas! in a régime subject utterly to the arbitrary will of a Secret Police, all powerful and having torture holes and concentration camps at its disposal every bit as bad as Buchenwald, the repressive apparatus of the State has no need for official death sentences; it can, and does, kill at leisure.

The victims of the infamous laws which we have enumerated are no longer shot after judgment is pronounced, but sent for twenty years to forced labour camps where they can hardly hope to survive beyond perhaps five years—unless the G.P.U. has mercy on them and despatches them at once in its infamous cellars by means of the justly notorious "administrative" bullet in the back of the neck.

"Man, arrived at perfection, is the first of all the animals, but he is certainly the last when he lives without law and without justice." Aristotle could imagine no degradation more base. How could he have conceived of the man who lives under the law and the justice of Stalin? The texts in which that law and that justice are embodied are official, irrefutable and ineffaceable. Are they not in themselves sufficient, entirely sufficient without further discussion, to prove all the rest: the misery, the terror, the slavery? It is heart-breaking to have to put such a question to the disciples of the philosopher who wrote: "The law can never rise superior to the economic régime and the cultural development conditioned by that régime." With what supreme contempt Karl Marx would have regarded "the idealist" who refused to see, or merely omitted to see, in a people oppressed by law a people scourged by hunger!

If the Soviet Government is compelled to slaughter juveniles in order to combat the scourge of juvenile criminality in its domain, it certainly cannot merit the noble title of "Socialist educator" which it claims so loudly.

If the Soviet State is compelled by means of domestic passports, labour books and threats of death to chain its workers to the factories and the peasants to the soil, then it is because the workers and peasants in the Soviet Union do not feel themselves in the "Fatherland of the Toilers" at all.

If the Soviet power must punish the child for the sins of his father, the woman for the sins of her husband, and the infant for the sins of the greybeard, then it is because all humanity has irremediably dried up and withered away in its entrails.

Can there still be any doubt left as to the truth of all these things? Very well, let us go a step further along the Golgotha without end which is the Stalinist terror.

The Reign of Stalin the Terrible

At this point it is interesting to refer to a study written by François Guizot in 1821 on the subject of conspiracy and political justice. His work is a moving confirmation of the permanence of the problems which face despotic governments, and the fatality which drives them on ever deeper into the mire of blood and lies.

"What can such a government undertake when it observes that society, badly administered, is shaking under its hand? Unable to govern, it will seek to punish. . . . What even the most redoubtable laws have not been able to envisage in advance, a bad and incompetent government will see. It will see rebellions and complots in the hostility of some men and in the discontent of many others, perhaps even in the indifference into which some citizens have fallen. . . . And then trials in which the Government is interested will abound.

And then the penal laws will be extended . . . beyond the limits they may rightly attain. . . . And then actions will be considered according to persons; intentions will take the place of acts; presumptions will make up for what is lacking in proof. And then the tribunals will hear talk of general matters, evident malice and factious sentiments. Public disposition, the trend of opinion, the entire life of individuals, their previous opinions and future interests, all those general considerations by which the conduct of the government should have been guided and was not, will then be brought up before the courts as subjects of accusation or proof . . . to provide the excuse for attacking, through the means of judges, an evil which neither reason nor law has given them either mission or means to cure. . . . Once started along the fatal road, authority is compelled to go on still further; it will help itself. . . . It will have agents who . . . from being spies become provocators. . . . It will seize upon the least embryo of crime, the least germ of a complot, to fan it, nourish it. . . . Its policy, half-blind and half-perverse, will dart forward in search of all the dangers from which it desires to save itself; it will go searching around in the centre of hostility and discontent, in the centre of all those abuses which engender its fears; there it will accumulate reports, inferences, proofs, and it will invent heaven knows what phantom to frighten first itself and then others."

Let us now see how well the prophecy fits events in the Soviet Union.

1. June, 1928. The Shakhty trial in the Donetz Region. Both foreign and Russian technicians admit fantastic acts of sabotage. The accused disappear.

2. 1929. Various trials *in camera* of Ukrainian technicians, officials of the waterways and forests, officials of the Food Commissariat and railway engineers. Most of the accused executed.

3. Spring, 1930. Trial of the so-called Industrial Party. The alleged leader of this party, Ramsin, chief accused at the trial, declares he was the accomplice of Poincaré and Briand. According to Ramsin, he and his party aimed at sabotaging Soviet industry and facilitating an Anglo-French military intervention against the Bolshevik Government. Death sentences commuted to forced labour.

4. March, 1931. Trial of the Mensheviks. The accused were former Social Democrats, economists, technicians and intellectuals who had succeeded in keeping themselves in minor posts, doing their work in silence and holding themselves aloof from all political activity. The accused men admitted having worked actively for war against the Soviet Union under the leadership of Léon Blum, Emile Vandervelde and other leaders of the Second International. The accused were sentenced to death and almost all executed.

5. March, 1933. Trial of high officials of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture. The accused admitted that they had been the cause of all the setbacks suffered in agriculture for the previous three years. Thirty-five of the accused were executed and forty others were condemned to terms ranging from eight to fifteen years' imprisonment.

6. April, 1933. Trial of eighteen engineers, including a number of British, accused. Sentences were confined to imprisonment, thanks to the energetic intervention of the British Government.

7. December, 1934. A general massacre followed on the assassination of Kirov by Nikolaiev, a member of the Communist Party. One hundred and seventeen leading Communists of Leningrad were executed and ninety condemned to forced labour. Amongst the rank and file, hundreds of thousands were deported to Siberia, and the fusillades rattled on for months. This time everything took place without a trial, and after mere appearance before officials of the Secret Police.

8. August, 1936. Trial of the Sixteen, including Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov and other prominent leaders of the Russian Revolution. The accused confessed to every conceivable crime: sabotage, conspiracy, provocation and terrorism. Sixteen executions took place.

9. November, 1936. Novosibirsk trial of nine Regional Leaders charged with conduct inimical to the State. All executed.

10. January, 1937. Trial against the members of the so-called "Parallel Centre." Defendants include Piatakov, Radek, Muralov, Sokolnikov and other well-known leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution. As in the trial of the Sixteen, the accused "confessed" to every conceivable crime. Seventeen executions. Sokolnikov and Radek were spared and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

11. June, 1937. Trial *in camera* of Generals Tuchachevsky, Yakir, Putna, Eidemann, Primakov, Viork, Uborovitch and Feldmann, all prominent heroes of the Civil War. Alleged unanimous confession of espionage. All were executed. In all in this massacre 384 generals of various grades were executed, or 58 per cent. of the total; the list being as follows:

- 2 Marshals (Tuchachevsky and Egorov) out of 5
- 3 Army group commanders out of 6
- 10 Army Commanders out of 13
- 57 Army corps commanders out of 85
- 110 Divisional commanders out of 193
- 202 Brigade commanders out of 400.

12. July, 1937. The Tiflis trial. Mdivani, Kovtaradze and Oukoudjava, all veteran leaders of the Bolshevik movement in Georgia, tried *in camera* and executed.

13. 1937. Trial in camera of the judges at the trial of the generals. Then trial of the judges of these judges. All executed.

14. March, 1938. Trial of the Twenty-one. The "Right-Wing Trotskyites," Rykov, Bucharin, Krestinsky and Rakovski, all well-known leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution, put into the dock together with Yagoda, Levine and others. All executed except Rakovski, who was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment, thanks largely to the vigorous intervention of his French friends.

All the former leaders of the democratic movements in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Roumania, Poland and Hungary (Petkov, Maniu, Yovanovitch, Mikolajczyk, etc.) were brought to trial accused of Fascism—or saved themselves by timely flight. Almost all of them had been the leaders of the resistance movement against Hitler and his satellites. Almost all of them were sentenced to death, and not all the sentences were commuted to imprisonment for life.

It is interesting to note that of the original twenty-two members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, only Stalin and Mme. Kollontay are still alive to-day. One only of all the others, Lenin himself, seems to have died a natural death. Djerjinsky and Uritzky died under mysterious circumstances. The sixteen others were shot, poisoned or assassinated at Stalin's orders. The number of prominent leaders and officials shot or deported without any vestige of a legal trial is legion.

Life in the Convict Camps

The shootings represent only one phase of the repression. A method which is much more profitable from the point of view of the State is the condemnation to forced labour. Such condemnations have been carried out on such a vast scale in the Soviet Union that it has led to the formation of a new social class of helots.

Dallin begins his examination with the words:

"It is indeed extraordinary that one should feel obliged to begin a chapter about a numerous social class of a great country by demonstrating that it exists" (Dallin, I, p. 126).

The authors provide the proof in an indisputable fashion. They quote Press correspondents, diplomats and technical experts who were on missions in the Soviet Union during the war, including Quentin Reynolds, Walter Graebner, Alice Moats, Philip Jordan, Walter Kerr, John Littlepage and the late Wendell Willkie. These men and women travelled from one part of the Soviet Union to the other, often under improvised conditions, and they were able to see for themselves the barbed wire, the watch-towers with machine guns trained on the interior, the guards with their huge dogs, and, from time to time, the prisoners themselves, "worn, haggard and in rags." All these unimpeachable witnesses give the place,

date and the circumstances of their macabre discoveries. Wendell Willkie even expresses a certain surprise when on going through the suburbs of Yakutsk he "failed to find a concentration camp—an exception to the rule" (Dallin, p. 126).

Since the appearance of Dallin's first book on the subject (Dallin, I), other important sources of evidence have been opened up. One of them is the Soviet diplomat, Kravchenko, who reveals irrefutable facts concerning the concentration-camp world which exists in the Soviet Union. And the other consists of a large group of Poles who were themselves inmates of these camps, and who succeeded in emerging from them to tell the tale thanks to what must have seemed to them the miracle of the Stalin-Sikorski Agreement. During the first Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, by arrangement with Nazi Germany, the Soviet authorities deported Polish citizens to the Soviet Union in masses. When Hitler turned on the Soviet Union, these unfortunates were suddenly transformed into allies of the Soviet Power. Stalin needed every available ounce of strength to stem the German invasion and so these incarcerated Poles were released to fight the Germans. Reassembled in London in the years 1945-6, they published their atrocious experiences in a book entitled *The Dark Side of the Moon*, from which we quote the following passage:

"From this first-hand evidence, it is known that vast regions around Kuibichev, in northern Siberia and in Kasakstan, with, to the north, the whole of the Komi Republic, up to Archangel, with Novaya Zembla, have camps of this kind. . . . All the way to the north from the railway line of Vologda-Kirova to the Urals, and to the north again, up to the Arctic Ocean and in the Far East, along the reaches of the Kolyma River (amongst the most deadly regions ever penetrated by man, where the conditions are so harsh and the climate is so ferocious that both convicts and N.K.V.D. recognize amongst themselves an unwritten 'Kolyma Law') in Kamchatka and in the territories running inland from Khabarovsk, Sakhalin and Vladivostok, it may be said that there is practically no normal human life whatever; that there exist only guarded and guards. The whole is one vast N.K.V.D. state, divided into 'zones,' each territory enclosed within barbed wire, patrolled by armed guards with their dogs, and made doubly secure by look-out towers and storks' nests containing sentries.

"Each zone covers hundreds of kilometres. . . . Thus camps take their names from the kilometres on which they stand, being called 'On the Hundredth Kilometre,' 'On the Thousandth Kilometre' . . . and so on" (*The Dark Side of the Moon*, pp. 21-2).

The first of these penitential labour camps was established on Solovietzky Island in the White Sea towards the end of 1923.

Its establishment coincided with the first harbingers of the personal dictatorship of Stalin. Up to 1926 the population of this camp varied between 5,000 and 10,000 prisoners, about three-quarters of whom were politicals (Mensheviks, priests and anarchists). But in 1926 political repression was greatly extended and began to involve first "Trotskyites" and then Right-Wingers. A special section (Gulag) was formed in the G.P.U. organization to administer what then became known by its initials S.L.O.N., or Northern Labour Camps Special Assignment, whose number had increased to twelve by 1929. From that date onwards these camps developed into one of the fundamental institutions of the Soviet system. The punishment of opponents, real, presumed or imagined, was combined in these camps with the execution of various industrial projects on the basis of slave labour. Kravchenko writes:

"The Central Administration of Forced Labour Camps—known as Gulag—was headed by the N.K.V.D. General Nedosekin, one of Beria's assistants. Nedosekin received orders for slave contingents from the State Defence Committee over the signatures of Molotov, Stalin, Beria and other members, and acted accordingly."

One day, when under pressure from all sides to supply such slave contingents, Nedosekin expressed himself as follows to Kravchenko: "Naturally, everyone thinks his own job is the most important. What are we to do? The fact is that *we haven't as yet fulfilled our plans for imprisonments.* (Underlined in the original.—S.L.). Demand is greater than supply."

Kravchenko comments: "Plans for imprisonments! The fantastic, cold-blooded cynicism of the phrase still makes me shudder" (Kravchenko).

Where the muddle of bureaucratic operations and the prevalence of oppressive misery threaten to compromise the execution of the sacred plan, where gigantic constructions are to rise from the arid soil of desert and icy steppe, where something must be done rapidly for publicity's sake at little cost to the Treasury, and where no free man would willingly consent to work—there the G.P.U. founds a labour camp. Numerical details on the rapid increase of these camps after 1929 and the equally rapid increase in the number of pitiable wretches in them will be dealt with in the passages devoted to the balance of the terror in the following chapter. Let us deal here with the conditions of human existence which prevail in these gehennas.

This sphere reserved to Stalinist "Socialism" is never even touched upon in the widespread practice of "self-criticism." We have therefore had to confine our evidence to that of people who have lived in the camps and prisons and returned to the haunts of man to tell the tale, including Bezonov, Solonievitsh, Ciligia, Serge, Shaefs, Vladimir and Tatiana Tchernavin, Victor Bornet, Valtin,

Lucien Blit (the leader of the Polish "Bund"), correspondents of Russian Menshevik journals, the letters of Polish Socialists like Victor Alter (a staunch and incorruptible enemy of Pilsudski who was interned by the G.P.U. in 1939, pardoned in 1941, and shot soon afterwards), the series of memoirs collected by Koestler in 1944, the evidence given by Polish prisoners in *The Dark Side of the Moon*, the information given by Lilian Mowrer and Olga Kochanka, and the revelations made to Dallin.

One simple fact reinforces the probability of even the most terrible stories about life in these camps: condemnation to such a camp can be a punishment only if life there is at least several degrees worse than ordinary, everyday life for the average Russian citizen living outside them. Now if it is freely admitted in official statements and in frequent flights of self-criticism that the average Russian citizen lives higgledy-piggledy in dormitories and barrack-like structures, is it so very incredible to be told that the convict rots in mud huts? And if it is freely admitted that the former lives on black bread, *kacha* and soup made of fish heads, then it is quite certain that the latter exists on cabbage, roots and garbage. If members of *kolkhozes* with no black marks against them lack tables, plates and spoons, what is surprising in the information that in the camps food is dished out in troughs for whole groups of prisoners at a time? Or in the added information that the strong batter down the weak in the struggle to be first to plunge their cupped hands into the scalding hot liquid? If the system of taking hostages is officially codified and practised amongst "free" Soviet citizens, it is surely inevitable that it should be practised amongst convicts, that whole groups of prisoners should be held collectively responsible, for instance, for the suicide of one of their number and executed *en masse*. And if extremely onerous labour norms are imposed on the "free" proletariat outside the camps, is it not self-evident that the convicts in these camps will be forced to work until they drop? And if even "shock workers" are dressed in "frightful sacks," surely there is nothing very surprising in the information that the convicts are dressed in rags and often go half-naked?

"As the stocks of clothing were insufficient a good half of the prisoners got nothing. They whined, argued, pleaded. . . . But behind a little table the director of stores pronounced judgment against which there was no appeal: 'Get out, you. Shut your mouth. You sold your trousers for a bottle of vodka. Vanish! Mizzle! Hop it!'

"An old peasant approached: 'Have pity. Give me something.'

"The director shrugged his shoulders: 'When will you people learn to take your things with you when the G.P.U. comes for you?' " (Solonievitch, pp. 59-60).

The most terrible of all these camps is the one known by the

initials B.A.M.; its work is excavating, and it is situated far away in the icy tundras of Eastern Siberia. For fear of being sent there for work, convicts in other camps have inflicted atrocious mutilations on themselves. These unfortunates are known as *samouroubes*, something like the "S.I.W." men of the war period, though their fate is more summary, for they come under a special legal statute: immediate execution. The trains carrying prisoners through Siberia are unheated, even in winter, and from time to time they halt in order to pitch out the frozen corpses of those who have died. It happens sometimes that such prison trains are shunted into sidings and forgotten. "The enemies of the people" crowded into the closed wagons then slowly freeze to death. The worms eat them and they eat the worms. The American journalist William White writes in his *Report on the Russians*:

"A transport of Soviet convicts is composed of goods wagons each with two small barred windows . . . or closed-in lorries. These wagons or lorries are supposed to be opened once a day, but sometimes they are abandoned for days at a time along roads or in sidings. When finally they are opened, it is to take out numerous corpses of deportees who have died of weakness, cold or thirst."

Naturally, when the human mass doomed to destruction numbers millions it is too much to expect of the authorities that they should provide each corpse with a coffin of its own.

When a convict in the Solovietzky Island camp in the Arctic Sea has committed what a drunken brute of a warder decides is an offence he is bound to a tree with arms and legs pulled backwards round the trunk or laid out bound on the ice until death ensues (evidence of Bezonov and General Zaitzev).

The situation did not improve during the war. The following recital taken from the book of Dallin and Nicolaievsky canvasses credence. It comes from the lips of convicts in the 1940-4 period, who miraculously escaped their destiny and succeeded in returning to the civilized world:

"*Labour Camp on the Onega River*: Bread is the basis of the food. . . . During the day you don't get anything but hot water. . . . The prisoners were half-naked. The temperature was very low: even in June we had up to 25 degrees Celsius below zero [-130 degrees Fahrenheit]. After twelve to thirteen hours' work in the snow-covered forests, we used to return to the barracks thoroughly drenched. In the same rags we went to sleep; there was nothing to cover ourselves with. . . . The prisoners could not wash; men did not shave. . . . Even May 1st was a working day. The majority of brigades in my camp had no rest during the entire period I spent there. . . . The great majority of the inmates were political prisoners, divided into two groups: one of them was 'spies,' the other 'socially dangerous elements.' . . . Penal labour camps are

places of the greatest moral degradation: prostitution, thieving and swindling mark the struggle for existence. . . .

"*Bukhta Nakhodka Camp (near Vladivostok)*: Only people who worked were fed. As there were too many people in the camp for the work available, a part of them, whether capable or incapable of working, were left behind in the barracks, where they were not given any food. . . .

"*Magadan Camp*: The stocks of clothing consisted not of the normal prison clothes, but mostly of garments confiscated from prisoners, or those left by the dead, and of parcels sent by the families of prisoners who had died. . . . The prisoners were extremely weakened, exhausted by their long imprisonment and heavy physical labour. Owing to the cold and dampness, most of them suffer from kidney trouble. They also suffer from swelling of the legs, open sores on the legs, on the arms and around the ribs, as well as from scurvy. Many go blind. There are a great many cases of frost-bite. . . . Many die of diarrhoea (dysentery, a variety peculiar to that part of the world, different from another type of dysentery known in the north); finally, people die from general exhaustion. . . . The woman prisoner B., suffering from lung trouble, was forced to wash floors in the barracks despite a serious cut on the hand; this caused blood poisoning. The commandant did not exempt her from work despite her fever of 39 degrees Celsius (102 degrees Fahrenheit). Only when she lost consciousness was she sent to Magadan to the hospital; 'to her funeral,' the commandant said when she left. . . . Others told me that in the mountains where the soil was heavy and the temperature low, they did not dig graves, but just collected a number of corpses and left them in the snow, far from the camp" (Dallin, pp. 151-2, 154-5, and 156-7).

Certain of these fantastic tales are authenticated by an admission let slip in the *Izvestia* of December 20th, 1937, during the course of an article on the construction of Socialism in the extreme north of the Soviet Union:

"Up to the present it was generally supposed that the building season in these parts of Siberia was no more than 100 days. The winter is very cold, 50 degrees below zero [Centigrade], but the officials in charge of building works have found that even in such conditions it is possible to work all the year round without interruption."

In other words, the White Sea Canal, the Turkestan-Siberian Railway (the famous Turksib), the gold mines of Yakutsk, the Arctic Circle Railway, and many other much-trumpeted engineering achievements came into the world garlanded with strings of human corpses.

Under our eyes to-day, the Soviet régime commits exactly the same atrocities as were perpetrated in such damnable places as

Buchenwald, Auschwitz, Belsen and Mauthausen—but instead of bringing down the horrified condemnation of the rest of mankind on its head, it earns the whole-hearted approval of millions of admirers throughout the world as the torch-bearer of Socialism.

What are the Motives?

The charges which render 190 million men and women in the Soviet Union liable to such treatment are as innumerable as the impostures of Stalin or the clumsy blunders of his bureaucracy.

A long-service veteran in this respect is "Trotskyism," and even long after the assassination of its supposed founder it still serves as the main scapegoat. As the *Manchester Guardian* of June 11th, 1937, observed:

"If the hundreds of thousands of suspects are really Trotskyites . . . then it is Stalin who ought to be in Mexico to-day and Trotsky in Russia."

The "Right-Wing Deviation" provides a convenient pendant to the "Left-Wing Deviation," and the general vagueness and elasticity of these two charges permits the authorities to sum them both up under the main heading of "Opportunism," which, in its turn, has innumerable sub-headings. The latest offence is "Westernism," which can mean evincing the least sympathy for liberal and humane ways of life as practised in Western civilization. These three capital crimes combine, interweave, and fall foul of each other often apropos the same accusation, in connection with the same accused and in the addled brains of the same judge. An oppositional group is never abused with less than three time-honoured and established terms signifying treachery to the State and symbolizing quite contrary doctrines. Unless, of course, it is a question of that diabolical deviation which includes all the others and suggests even more: "the deviation of silence."

After political offences come offences of a military nature, such as espionage, war provocation against the Soviet Union, and desertion over the frontiers. Then there are offences of a terrorist nature: conspiracy against the Father of the Peoples, and instigation to strikes; followed by those of a cultural nature, such as formalism, idealism and symbolism; and those of a moral nature such as petty-bourgeois prejudices, social insincerity, individualism and pessimism. And, finally, that polluted stream of all the maladies of the régime, sabotage.

There is no breakdown or setback suffered by the economic, political, military, cultural or social machinery of the régime which is not put down to sabotage. There is no shade of heterodox, economic, political, military, cultural or social opinion which does not partake in some way of the Satanism of sabotage. A fugitive thought, a carelessly-hummed air, the fashion in which a

stamp is affixed, the way in which a man climbs the stairs, a fall, a pet aversion, a greeting, a smile—all such things and many more can be interpreted as sabotage of the great work of building up Socialism.

Engineers surveying the ground for oil deposits are charged with sabotage when they do not find any. They have “deflected the deposits underground.” The officials in charge of fisheries have sabotaged when they fail to fulfil the planned catch figures. They have “let fish pass without catching them.” An architect whose house collapses has committed sabotage “by deliberately erecting beams badly.” Pressmen have committed sabotage by publishing a photo of Stalin in which “a shadow fell across the face” (*Pravda*, July 20th, 1937). Pharmacists have sabotaged quinine in order to let malaria have free rein (*Izvestia*, May 28th, 1937). A ship's captain has committed sabotage when his ship is wrecked (*Bakinski Rabotchi*, September 2nd, 1937). A female traveller committed sabotage by poisoning the drinking water in a railway carriage (*Izvestia*, September 27th, 1937). Orthodox priests have committed sabotage by destroying the cattle by sprinkling poisoned water on them whilst blessing them. And one priest, a man named Strehine, committed sabotage by spreading scarlet fever in the villages (*Antireligioznik*, No. 10 of October, 1938).

And withal the crime of sabotage is only one point of condensation relatively clearly defined in a cosmos of crimes without shape, without form, without reason and without a name. But before reporting the improbable and farcical crimes imputed to citizens of the Soviet Union let us mention in what connection the Soviet Press revealed them to the world.

The Soviet repressive system is not free from the all-pervading bureaucratic muddle. When the purge of 1937 unexpectedly went beyond the limits set by Stalin, the Central Committee of the Communist Party called a halt and published a “Circular on the Faults committed by Party Organizations in the Matter of Expulsions” (*Pravda*, January 19th, 1938). This circular admitted openly that it would have cost a man his head to have whispered an instant before its appearance—namely, that many innocents had suffered. Its object was to rehabilitate these innocents and to unmask the secret enemies who had unjustly slandered them. But at the same time and in the same connection the same old expulsions were to continue merrily:

“The rehabilitation of comrades wrongfully accused by enemy provocators must be combined with the extirpation of all enemies not yet unmasked” (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, February 1st, 1938).

And on May 14th, 1938, the same newspaper was much disturbed: “And what about the slanderers? You can't find them? You must find them.” But “rehabilitation” often presented very

serious difficulties. First of all, what had become of the martyr? Did anyone know? And if he was traced at last in the labyrinth of camps, where was he to be quartered now, and where was he to be employed? His sleeping berth was already occupied by another, and so was his place in the factory. And to make matters still more difficult there was deliberate ca-canny on the part of officials uncertain what their next orders were going to be, aggravated by the deliberate "loss" of compromising dossiers. However, this inertia in the extermination of the wicked exterminators was soon overcome and then developed, according to custom, to fantastic excess. And so in April, 1938, a new circular was issued denouncing "the mechanical denouncers of honest denouncers" and insisting on the implacable liquidation of "those who have rehabilitated with suspect zeal" the enemies of the people exposed by honest denunciations—that is to say, those who were found culpable, then declared innocent and now declared truly culpable again, until the next circular.

Such vicious circles have a high value for the objective historian. Thanks to a reaction against the previous excesses, these excesses are admitted by the Press with a servile but highly suggestive complaisance. And the subsequent campaign against the denunciators reveals the background of their denunciations.

A girl member of the Komsomol became suspect because she had declared that "nothing interested her." Seven students were accused of "having formed an anti-Soviet and counter-revolutionary group" because they read together a book describing life on a former Czarist property on the site of their school (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, March 27th and May 17th, 1938). Another girl member of the Komsomol was "unmasked" because she had visited a certain M., an alleged "unmasked enemy of the people," and had gone picking flowers with his wife (*Pravda*, February 7th, 1938). A female student was expelled because it was discovered that her maternal grandfather had been a *kulak*. Another girl student was denounced as "an accomplice of enemies of the people" because one day she had met on the street, and stopped to talk to, a former teacher of German at her school, "who was *subsequently* unmasked as a spy." A young lecturer in chemistry mentioned to his pupils that the production of chemical colours had first been successfully accomplished in Germany; he found himself arraigned for having "glorified Fascist Germany" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, January 30th, 1938).

"Omitted to suspect an enemy in the worker X"—found guilty. "Remained passive during the preliminary examination"—found guilty. "Secretly supported the opposition between the individual and the collective organization"—found guilty (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, January 8th, 1938).

A secretary of a Komsomol committee having been born with a ridiculous name which embarrassed him and made other people laugh when they heard it, changed his name to Ivanov, but, alas! it was an unfortunate choice; it belonged to a traitorous character in a play, and the unfortunate found himself the centre of a trial "for secretly sympathizing with odious characters in a play." A student of the Pedagogical Institute of Kharkov concluded an enthusiastic discourse to his fellow students with the appeal, "Rally round the best men of our party!" He was charged and convicted. He had omitted to mention who the best men of the party were (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, March 11th and 21st, May 25th and November 7th, 1938).

An old woman of seventy-two was incautious enough to complain loudly that, try as she would, she was unable to buy a pair of shoes for her granddaughter of eighteen. Both were arrested and charged: the grandmother for incitement to insurrection and the granddaughter as a passive accomplice. A female teacher was convicted: she gave birth every year in order to make people believe in her loyalty to the régime (*Izvestia*, January 27th and February 8th, 1938).

The above fantastic list is a mere excerpt from the long list of offences which make the life of the unanimous Soviet people one long misery, but it gives us some idea of just what lies behind the innumerable, rambling and incoherent accusations flying around in the Fatherland of the Toilers. The Russian people under the Soviet régime are unanimous only in their common discontent—a discontent which embraces every possible thing and every possible theme, and which takes on every possible form. There is no doubt that beyond themselves, or mad with rage at the unjust persecutions to which they are subjected, or driven frantic by contradictory accusations, enervated by constant muddle, hungry, exploited, humiliated and exhausted, ordinary citizens commit in imagination all the gamut of possible sabotage in every possible state of emotion from fierce anger to passive contempt, and that some of them certainly dream of fearful vengeance. But what is open to these scores of millions of people, spied on, controlled, denounced and bullied if they desire to express their disapproval? The allusion, the subtly indirect demonstration, the deliberate lapse, the involuntary lapse, the fugitive thought, the carelessly hummed air, the fashion in which they stick on a stamp, the way in which they climb the stairs, a fall, a pet aversion, a greeting, a smile. . . .

The suspicions of the authorities are one-tenth justified, and the haze through which the terror perceives them incites it to multiply them by ten. And for the sum total the régime bears the responsibility.

To what End?

At all times terror has sought to make opposition physically impossible. In the Soviet Union it has certainly not failed. However, the means mobilized in the struggle appear out of all proportion to the strength of the enemy, a political minority exterminated a hundred times over already.

The essential task of the terror is quite different. When one man dominates everything, then everything is his responsibility. By distributing the burden of governance amongst a great number of responsible people, a democratic régime greatly reduces the gravity of the errors inevitably committed in the process of government, and diminishes their inimical character. A dictator who concentrates all power into his own hands must at the same time face a concentration of all the reproaches levelled against his rule. The situation is rendered still more onerous by the fact that in suppressing all liberty the dictator has declared himself infallible.

In such circumstances, the cry of "sabotage" offers him the ideal excuse for all the shortcomings of his rule. It covers all conceivable mishaps, misadventures, faults, unexpected happenings, miscalculations and failures. It lends itself to every possible figment of the imagination and to every conceivable police provocation. To verify a charge of sabotage requires technical investigation, and it is thus removed from the understanding and control of the masses. And, finally, and above all, the charge of sabotage settles the vexed question of political responsibility; the general lack of success is satisfactorily explained by hostile machinations, and each instance remains "a case in itself."

Other uses of the Soviet terror are obvious: it disposes of Stalin's personal enemies, of his accomplices if they know too much, and of witnesses who might make awkward revelations. In addition, it regulates innumerable cases of envy, arrivism and cruelty. And, finally, it spreads fear, a fear deliberately provoked with a number of objectives: to make the cadres supple and obedient, to intimidate the masses and make them resigned to their fate, to canvass support for the government by painting a horrible picture of cohorts of enemies practising unspeakable machinations—after all, a régime pursued in such a relentless fashion by Beelzebub must have some good points.

By what Means?

In the exclusively repressive part of its mission the Soviet terror confines itself, as a terror, to amplifying the habitual procedure of police in all countries, and as a totalitarian terror, to amplifying the natural abominations of all terror systems.

Shootings, in so far as their aim is to stifle sporadic explosions of

discontent, take place *en masse*. Arrests, too, are carried out on a vast scale—that is to say, by quarters, by districts, by whole provinces at a time. Searches are carried out on a scale many times greater even than arrests, and individual questionings are conducted on a scale many times greater even than searches. Individual citizens are snatched away from their normal lives at any moment of the day or night, hurried off to any place anywhere, lost, struck off the list of the living, annihilated. A worker can leave his wife or his mother or his daughter in the morning, and find them gone when he returns in the evening, and to the end of his days he may never know, even hypothetically or allusively, why she was seized or what became of her. She is henceforth dead to him without having died.

“Whole nations who were difficult to control in their native country would be shifted *en masse* to unaccustomed regions and amidst strange neighbours, where their only hope of survival would lie in obedience to the supreme power” (H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, Newnes, London (n.d.), Vol. I, p. 109).

Such were the methods adopted by the Assyrian Emperors Tiglat Phalassar III and Sargon II; such are the methods of Stalin in our own day, and to make his task easier he can use railways and lorries to move his slaves, telephones to control their movement, and machine guns to hold them in check.

The first uprooting of populations on a massive scale took place in the years 1930-33 to “liquidate the *kulaks* as a class.” We have already referred to this cataclysm on several occasions. A second operation of the same nature and on the same scale was carried out when the territories annexed in 1939 and 1940 were Sovietized. A third wave was let loose after the war in order to re-establish the undisputed sway of Russian centralism in areas where, thanks to the German occupation, the populace had shown inclinations towards independence. For example—one amongst many others—the Crimean Soviet Republic was “de-Tartarized.” The entire Kalmuck and Techtchen populations were systematically dispersed over vast spaces, which means in literal fact that several million human beings of both sexes and all ages were uprooted, rounded up in columns and driven like cattle, on foot or in primitive carts, between lines of armed militia, out into the wilds. Families, too, were broken up, and those who protested were shot out of hand. And when the countryside was cleared of Tartars Russians were sent into their place.

In the Ukraine the vengeance taken by the Soviet authorities was even more savage. Those guilty of possessing Ukrainian nationality were dragged away from their homes by the million and distributed over the Siberian labour camps. Nicholas Krustchev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, drawing

the Leninist balance of his activities for the benefit of the plenary session of his Central Committee in August, 1946, declared: "Within a period of eighteen months 64 per cent. of the presidents of Soviet executive committees, 91 per cent. of the presidents of the *kolkhozes* and 70 per cent. of the directors of tractor stations were deprived of their office for not having sufficiently struggled against the survival of bourgeois nationalist anti-Soviet ideologies in the Press, in literature and in the teaching of history." In their place men of pure Russian extraction were appointed, and, in addition, a considerable number of Mongolians imported from the depths of Asiatic Russia in order that they might give full vent to their legendary savagery freed of the restraining influence which might have been exercised by the existence of fraternal bonds. The comment can safely be left to Molotov: "The flower of our Constitution is the liberty it gives to the federal republics to choose their own path."

The School of Terror—Denunciation

Since the omnipotent will of Stalin loves to see itself fulfilled in the enthusiastic approval of his people, the latter must naturally enthusiastically express their desire to be terrorized.

The tone was set by the Master himself:

"All this riff-raff, all these Trotskyites and Bucharinites and their like, have long since become nothing but a band of spies and assassins, wreckers and diversionists. . . . These gentlemen crawl on their bellies and writhe like vipers to go about their treasonable work."

And with one accord the camp followers take up the theme an obsequious octave or two higher. Radek is denounced as "an ignoble super-traitor," "a venomous, crawling reptile" who "hides his poisonous fangs behind a cajoling smile," and "twines himself around the powerful oak of the Soviet State like a snake," and "changes his colour at will in order to continue weaving counter-revolutionary spiders' webs behind the scenes." After the assassination of Kirov, an indignation meeting was organized in the factory in which the American Andrew Smith was working. The orator did his job in the following terms:

"We must locate every member of the Zinoviev group and all those who were ever connected with it. We must send them where they belong, to a place from which they will never come back. Your first test will come at the Kirov funeral. Remember, no worker must remain at the factory, or at his home" (Smith, p. 256).

Mazai, a Soviet foundry worker, declared, referring to the members of the Trotsky-Zinoviev group: "It is useless to hold any further discussion with such people; they should be pitched into a cauldron of molten steel" (*Les Conquêtes de le démocratie soviétique*, Bureau d'Editions, Paris, 1937).

The members of the Soviet Academy were anxious not to be left behind, and they lodged the following request:

"We demand of our Soviet judges that they should punish the cowardly traitors without pity. We demand the destruction of these miserable degenerates. . . . Let the pursuit of the other Right-Wing dissidents be carried through to the bitter end!" (*Izvestia*, January 27th, 1937).

The writers, too, hastened to add their voice, and in a statement published in the *Pravda* on January 24th, 1937, they declared that "no author amongst the great geniuses of literature has ever been able to imagine such abominable and monstrous criminal types." This effusion was signed by Alexis Tolstoy, Fadeyev, Pavlenko and Bruno Yassenki—the same Bruno Yassenki who was shot a few months later as a Trotskyite.

And a Soviet poet let himself go in the *Izvestia* of January 29th, 1937, to some purpose:

*"What! You have eyes and tongues;
You have the aspect of human beings.
May the garrotte of public opinion throttle you.
May your leprous corpses burn and be reduced to ashes."*

A Soviet engineer giving evidence before the tribunal declared that he was "trembling with eagerness to exterminate the accused as swiftly as possible" (*Pravda*, January 26th, 1937). The children, too, were called in to make their contribution to the destruction of "these mad dogs and bloody beasts." Young women hurried to describe them as "base riff-raff with the snouts of beasts." Red soldiers declared them "bought and base cast-offs." The sick, assembled at meetings in their hospitals, hurled epithets, such as "scum of the earth," "collection of filth," "refuse of society," "base scoundrels," and so on. Obviously no one could safely lag behind the accused themselves.

The vocabulary is provided by the Master himself. It creates the requisite atmosphere. And in that atmosphere the human heart itself shrivels up. It is thus that a people, renowned for kindness and good nature, serves its apprenticeship in cruelty. Cruelty and denunciation go hand in hand, sustaining and encouraging each other like the microbe and the filth.

"Thanks to numerous denunciations, two-thirds of the Communist personnel in the Gorki Works in Kiev have become suspect in the eyes of the authorities" (*Pravda*, August 31st, 1938).

"At Yaroslav the Communist Youth expelled 2,000 of its members as enemies in 1937 on the basis of summary denunciations, such as: 'There is reason to believe that such and such a one is bribed by a spy'" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, January 29th, 1938).

The Soviet Government does its utmost to encourage a spirit of

denunciation amongst the people. In January, 1937, Kalinin, then President of the Presidium of the Soviet Supreme Council, devoted a special report to the question of spying and denunciation, declaring that "Soviet vigilance demands that each should do his best to see what others do and how they conduct themselves in everyday life."

A tenth muse comes to the aid of Soviet art: "In our literature we suffer from none of those pitiful indecisions of the student Raskolnikov when he asks himself whether he may kill the old *rentier*," declared Alexis Tolstoy. In fact, in order to gain much Socialist merit, all a Soviet writer need do is to belaud a young woman who denounces her best friend to the authorities because she has not in her turn denounced her brother to the police as suspected of lukewarmness in the cause (*The Sisters*, a novel by Verssayev). And the Soviet Minister Mikoyan, exalted at reading of the heroism of good Communists who had denounced a brother, a wife or a father, exclaimed with enthusiasm: "Such things would be impossible in a bourgeois country, but in our country one could cite numerous examples" (*Postroenie Partii*, January 15th, 1938).

This campaign for the education of the populace as police spies concentrates its most ardent efforts on the youth. A teacher of the most effective methods of spying and denunciation instructs his class as to the best ways of unmasking "wreckers":

"What would you do to discover the stealers of wheat?"

"I would keep my eye on everyone. . . . Even if it were my father or my mother whom I saw stealing wheat, I should immediately denounce them to the political section" (*Molot*, August 28th, 1933).

Little Pronia Kobiline is held up to emulation by the *Pravda* of May 20th, 1934. She wrote the following effusion against her mother, whom she denounced to the Political Section as "a stealer of Socialist goods":

*"You are a cruel wrecker of the kolkhoze;
Mother, you are a bitter enemy.
And since you do not love the kolkhoze
I can no longer live with you.*

*"One winter's night, dark and cold,
When you were charged with guarding wheat,
You entered the granary yourself
To steal the wheat of the kolkhoze.*

*"You lead a lazy life during half the summer,
And in winter in the dead of night
You exchanged the stolen wheat for fodder,
Thereby sabotaging the sowing plan."*

The virtuous young Pronia was granted a State bounty. But her unfortunate mother might well have replied to the Father of the Peoples in the traditional verse:

*"I stole the goose from off the common;
But you stole the common from the goose."*

Mania Nomiátov, a Young Pioneer, is another prodigy of Soviet virtue. First of all she denounced her brother for slaughtering a calf, and then she denounced her mother for having whipped her for denouncing her brother. She was held up as a model at school for the emulation of her fellow pupils. However, it transpired that on hearing of this deed and listening to the accompanying sermon, one of the pupils expressed indignation at Mania's actions instead of showing the proper enthusiasm.

"This and other facts equally opprobrious show how necessary it is to explain to children the difference between Communist morality and bourgeois morality" (*Antireligioznik*, October, 1934).

The *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of September 18th, 1935, also attacks those who feel a repugnance at spying and denunciation. Having praised a Young Communist named Maximov who had been instrumental in sending his father to prison for five years for defalcation, the paper describes how, returning afterwards to his home, the young hero found his mother in tears instead of rejoicing.

"Maximov acted against the precepts of the old bourgeois morality which we have not yet succeeded in altogether overcoming. He did his duty as a *komsomoletz* by denouncing his father who had endangered our new society by stealing common property."

Denunciation need not wait for confirmation; it can be preventive and based on suspicion, as witness the following samples from the file of a party committee:

"P—— was formerly a waif. Personality obscure. Requires verification.

"Ch—— verification doubtful. Changes from one place to the other.

"Iv——, a superior bird. Excessive pride. Pretends to be sensitive.

"R——, one feels that his ideology is very impure" (as quoted in the *Pravda* of February 26th, 1938).

The acute housing shortage, the higgledy-piggledy life of barracks and dormitories, and the preparing of meals in overcrowded communal kitchens create pathogeneuous hotbeds for the development of denunciation, born often of a piece of furniture shifted out of place, a cooking pot damaged, a purchase envied, a conversation overheard, and so on. Denunciation flourishes naturally because passions, jealousy, envy, intrigues, animosity and hatred are all compressed in a small space, and there is no escape from a neighbour. Denunciation flourishes from the tyrannous control exercised

on the private life of the individual. It flourishes because of the tyrannous control exercised on the private opinion of the individual.

And the great river of Soviet tribulations and sufferings is fed liberally from all these muddy sources, pouring its corroding acids into every little nook and cranny of society, stirred up in whirls and eddies by the convulsive agitation of fear—fear which eats away the last healthy tissues of the heart and mind, fear which paralyses the mainsprings of action, fear which hampers the flight of the spirit, fear of everything, fear of nothing, fear of fear.

And if in such circumstances some unfortunates still cling to the last breath of life: their memories; they are finally driven to that pitiful renunciation of themselves in the face of the terror—suicide. We have already quoted a list of men of letters who took that way out; let us add a list of well-known names: it includes Joffe; Lutovinov; Scrypnik; Bogdan; Lominadze; Khandyan; Tomski; Gamarnik; Ikhodyaiev; Tcherviakov, the President of the Executive Committee of White Russia; Liubtchenko, the President of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukraine; Syrtsov, the short-lived President of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union—and let us not forget the name of Nadiejda Allilouieva, the wife of Stalin.

The Balance of the Terror

Having sketched a picture of the Soviet terror, its barbarous legislation, its diabolical procedure and its pitiful consequences, let us seek to estimate the extent of its ravages. As we still lack full details concerning the vast shifting of populations after the war, because the usual retrospective revelations have not yet had time to develop, we propose to confine ourselves to the ravages of the terror before the war—alas! they are amply sufficient to characterize the régime as a whole.

In 1937 the Soviet Government decided to organize a population census. This operation was, of course, "historic," and its aim was "to prove to the world the grand victories of Socialism." A vast campaign of preparation began. According to the *Pravda*, more than 1 million census-takers and controllers were chosen, examined and instructed in their tasks. However, the Soviet authorities were not altogether happy about it, and Kraval, the Vice-President of Gosplan, was full of anxious warnings: "Perhaps the enemy will try to slip into our ranks in order to compromise the success of the census. The enemy might bring it about that a part of the population escaped the census."

Brusquely, on September 26th, 1937, a decree was issued suspending operations "because they are not in accordance with the exigencies of Soviet science." Kraval himself was accused of sabotage, and arrested, as were other statistical controllers. Most

certainly the authorities were not happy about it at all. They were more than nervous about the results of the census.

The new census to be carried out in 1939 was even more meticulously prepared. The *Pravda* of April 17th, 1938, and the *Izvestia* of May 24th, 1938, both enumerated with a wealth of explanatory detail "the faults to be avoided" in order that "the errors" of the preceding year should not be repeated. The results of the census were declared to be "State secrets" and even "military secrets" (see the *Molodaya Guardia*). All the "exigencies of Soviet science" having been complied with this time and a few more statistical officials shot, the Press was at last able to announce to the world that in January, 1939, the Soviet Union had 170 million inhabitants.

However, the normal growth of the population in the Soviet Union is 2 per cent. per annum (declaration of Mejlauok, the President of Gosplan, and of the *Izvestia*, October 10th, 1936). The prohibition of abortion in 1936 was not calculated to reduce the annual rate of growth. Now, the census taken in January, 1929, showed that the total population of the Soviet Union was 154 million inhabitants. Thus, taking the official figure for the average annual growth of the population, the grand total of inhabitants in January, 1939, should have been 184 millions instead of the 170 millions officially announced as a result of the 1939 census.

But the latter figure gives rise to serious objections, and in fact economists and statisticians at work outside the Soviet Union were made so curious by the mystery of this census that they began to investigate the matter for themselves with the assistance of ordinary scientific means. Prokopovitch, working from the number of peasant families given each year by the official statistics of the Commissariat of Agriculture, and knowing the average number of members of a peasant family in 1933 (assuming that this number has remained constant), arrived at a total figure for the agricultural population. With the assistance of other partial statistics, he estimated the population of the towns, and demonstrated that it had not increased since 1928 except by approximately the number by which the rural population had decreased. In this way he arrived at a total population of 154,600 for the year 1938.¹

Yourievsky, working on the same problem by different methods,² came to the remarkably approximate total figure of 155,000,000.

These concurrent results obtained by two of the most competent economists in Russian affairs were subjected to a very close scrutiny and analysis by various authors (Bettelheim, Sorbonne thesis; Baloueff, *Le Mystère de la population soviétique*; *La Vie Economique et Sociale*, May 15th, 1938; *Bulletin Quotidien*, May 2nd, 1939; Salomon Schwartz in the *Socialisticheskaya Viestnie* at the end of 1938 and the

¹ For details consult the *Bulletin Economique*, No. 139 of 1938.

² For details consult the *Annales Russe*, published by Miliukov, 1938 issue.

beginning of 1939; and Krivitzky, from confidential G.P.U. information). All these investigations, allowing for one or two minor corrections, arrived at a confirmation of the total figure of 155 millions for the population of the Soviet Union in 1938, which would mean that at the utmost the total population in 1939 could not be more than 158 millions.

Thus, according to the figures officially given by Stalin, there were no less than 14 million people missing from Soviet statistics in 1939, and, according to rather more scientific sources, no less than 25 million.

What had become of them?

Statistics of the Terror

Let us group the victims of the terror up to 1940 into two classes: those who died in prison and in the camps as the result of the inhuman régime prevailing there, and those who were shot in the towns and in the countryside, either after formal sentence of death or out of hand.

The first hecatomb can be measured by estimating, on the one hand, the average number of people permanently in prison, or interned in the forced labour camps, with the average length of life of a Soviet convict on the other. Our statistics begin with the year 1929, the bloody sunrise of the First Five-Year Plan.

Chirviudt, the Director of Soviet Prisons, revealed in a pamphlet published in 1930 and since withdrawn from circulation that the R.S.F.S.R. alone could pride itself on 1,216,000 convictions in 1929. The American newspaper correspondent, Walter Duranty, estimated the number of transported and exiled persons at 2 millions in 1930 (*New York Times*, February 3rd, 1931). At the Sixth Soviet Congress in March, 1931, Molotov was not ashamed to announce publicly that 1,134,000 persons deported from various parts of the country were held in the forests of the north for timber-felling. Solovski, "Island of Horror," has received 662,190 deportees since then, of whom 73,000 were women and 19,000 children (*The Times* and *Dernières Nouvelles* in January, 1931). Taking all the other camps into account and relying on information provided by the Commissariat of Labour, Hugh Walpole arrived at a total of 5 million convicts at the end of 1931. Thus the First Five-Year Plan of political repression started off on a very solid basis.

With the "dekulakisation" it surpassed itself. Out of 5,618,000 peasants declared *kulaks* in 1929, only 149,000 were left on June 1st, 1934, according to a statement by Molotov. Five and a half millions had already been "liquidated" (speech to the Seventh Soviet Congress). The liquidation proceeded rapidly, as can be seen from the following evidence: Boris Souvarine quotes from the Rostov Press concerning the deportation *en bloc* of three *stanisty* of

Kuban Cossacks, totalling approximately 500,000 souls. At Narsyn 100,000 peasants were deported in a single season. "Women and young girls gave themselves to the first-comer for a crust of bread" (Ciliga, p. 183).

And in the towns we are acquainted with the figures for certain wholesale arrests—for instance, the arrest of 100,000 people in Leningrad after the assassination of Kirov in December, 1934. Jacques Berger, an eyewitness, reported that for two weeks the stations were crowded with a great multitude of these unfortunates selling their goods and chattels on the platforms. Throughout the Soviet Union, arrests of the same kind totalled several hundred thousands. Krivitzky estimates that at the time of the 1937 purge 300,000 people were arrested in the month of May alone. The arrested people were chiefly members of the Communist Party and their families. General Lutchkov of the Far Eastern G.P.U. estimates the total number of arrests carried out in 1937 at 1,000,000.

The loudly-announced amnesties, with their official figures and percentages, permit us to get some idea of the number of convicts in certain camps. For instance, at the end of the First Five-Year Plan, 72,000 convicts from one camp on the White Sea Canal had their sentences reduced for good conduct (decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets dated August 4th, 1934). A similar gesture of clemency was made in 1937 for over a million and a half convicts in all camps (Prague Agency "Znamia Rossi," October, 1937). These measures go far to make the figures of private sources more credible. Solonievitch and Ciliga, who were both in Soviet internment camps, estimate the total number of deportees permanently living in the camps as being around 5 million, of whom 3 million are in the one vast camp of Bamlog, whose area is as large as a whole province.

General Outchkov gives us the following details: five camps in the Far East comprise something like half a million convicts. There are thirty other camps throughout the Union. Petrov, an agent of the G.P.U. in Siberia, gives the same figure, which, as he specially points out, does not include the imprisoned. The *Socialisticheskaya Viestnie* of July 30th, 1938, arrives after meticulous and detailed calculations at an average total of 7 millions including all forms of detention. Dallin gives an impressive list of names of several score camps and "combines of camps," indicating their geographical position and specifying the kind of forced labour carried out in them. In 1941 the well-known Polish Socialist, Victor Alter, an ex-deportee of the Soviets, whose tragic fate we have already mentioned, estimated the number of people interned at between 8 and 12 million. *The Nineteenth Century and After* concluded as the result of a careful and detailed study that by 1944 the number of interned people had increased to between 10 and 18 millions:

a figure greater than that of the entire "free" proletariat in the factories (Dallin and Nicolaievsky, pp. 188-9).

It is quite certain that we shall be well within the actual truth if we reckon conservatively that *between the years 1929 and 1940 there were never less than seven million human beings of all ages and both sexes interned in Soviet forced labour camps*, a figure which means that out of fifteen adult Russians one was a convict.

Stalin, like the classic despots of Asia, economizes in treasure, but is extremely lavish in human life. Let us leave him to flounder in the economic yield of this system of human slavery and turn our attention to its yield in corpses.

In the worst camps in the far north the average length of life of a prisoner is not more than two years (Zaitzev). And as far as the camps in the interior are concerned, several investigators believe that out of the 5 million peasants deported as *kulaks* at the time of the forced collectivization, 3 million have since died (Bettelheim, p. 167). In his book, *Out of the Deep*, which we have already mentioned, Hugh Walpole comes to the conclusion that the mortality in certain camps is over 60 per cent.

During the war the fighting made serious inroads on the human reserves of the Soviet Union; so much so that the Soviet Government decided to ameliorate conditions a little, with the result that the mortality rate amongst the interned decreased. But that fact has no relation to the statistics governing the decade 1929-39, which interests us here in connection with the 25 million human beings missing from the official Soviet census of 1939. With these three conclusions—permanent population of the camps on an average, 7 millions; number of persons deported during the decade 1929-39, 15 millions; average mortality rate in the camps, 12 per cent.—we come to a figure of *8,000,000 dead amongst the deported masses*.

A second hetacomb of victims consists of those who were executed. We have no overall figures in this respect, and we must make do with partial information, but such information as we do possess is terribly significant.

Let us begin with a preliminary estimate of the prominent personalities massacred by Stalin. We cannot give the names of all the prominent victims who were shot, because to do so would be to fill up all our available space, or even the lists for all the purges which have taken place since 1928. Here then is a list referring solely to purges which took place in the years 1937-8. The following were executed or disappeared without trace:

Five out of the seven Presidents of the last Central Executive Committee of the Soviets.

Nine out of the eleven All-Union Ministers in office at the end of 1936.

Nine out of the thirteen Ministers of the R.S.F.S.R.

Eight out of the thirteen Ministers of the Ukrainian Republic.

Seven out of the thirteen Ministers of the White Russian Republic.

Twenty-five out of the sixty-eight candidate members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Forty-three out of the fifty-three secretaries of the central organizations of the Party.

Ninety per cent. of the leading foreign Communists normally resident in Moscow as members of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, or living in Moscow as political refugees owing to the persecution of their party at home.

Fifty-three per cent. of the presidents and 82 per cent. of the secretaries of the central committees of the labour unions.

The great majority of the governing collegium of the G.P.U.

The great majority of the members of the commission which drafted the Constitution of 1936.

Seventy out of the eighty members of the Soviet War Council.

Fifty-eight per cent. of all Soviet generals.

Forty-two per cent. of all the directors of metallurgical, mining and engineering enterprises.

Thirty-five per cent. of all the higher employees of these industries.

The great majority of the directors, managers, etc., of the cotton industry.

This incomplete list refers only to the more sensational events of the "bullet in the nape of the neck" offensive. Apart from this shower of falling stars there was a hecatomb of anonymous subaltern officials numbering many tens of thousands. Whether prominent leaders or simple citizens, a cohort of corpses forms continuously at the very heart of Soviet life, a line of death along which the fury of authority expends itself. In the anonymous history of this monotonous river of blood, certain rapids and eddies more intense than usual mark the acute paroxysms of the evil: 1929-30, years in which the Right-Wing opposition joined the Left-Wing opposition in suffering, and their common disaster contributed the first hecatombs of victims to the Five-Year Plan; 1932 saw the storm of "dekulakization." Innumerable and concurring reports gradually filtered out of the country concerning peasant risings in the Caucasus, the Urals and the Ukraine against the enforced collectivization. It was then that the *politotdels* were hurriedly sent out into the countryside to support the Soviet Power, and the special sections of the G.P.U. re-established order in the manner we have previously described. The peasants were slaughtered even more rapidly than they had secretly slaughtered their cattle. In the years 1930 to 1934 the sovereign workers were shot by the thousand for having shown an inclination towards strikes and "sabotage." Towards the end of 1934 the members of the Communist Party themselves were massacred by tens of thousands after the death of Kirov.

Following a short pause brought about by the promulgation of the most humane Constitution the world has ever seen, the endless night of St. Bartholomew began again. The years 1937 to 1939 witnessed a methodical carnage. The suspects were no longer called to account, but condemned by lists drawn up on the typewriter. General Loutchkov relates that of 10,000 persons arrested in one district alone in the Far East no less than 8,000 were executed. In various prisons in the same period 12,000 prisoners. were shot. To sum up, one can reckon that *a total of 1,000,000 people were slaughtered in the years from 1929 to 1939.*

Statistics of the Famine

And the final hecatomb of corpses of the period under review was provided by the famine of the years 1932 to 1934. Unlike the famine which desolated the west of Russia after the First World War, the responsibility for this famine can justly be laid at the door of the Soviet Government, for it was caused directly by that Government's deliberate policy. The famine took place in a year in which climatic conditions were excellent for agriculture, and the new scourge raged most fiercely in Northern Caucasia and in the Ukraine, the most fertile agricultural lands in Europe, but the districts hardest hit by the madness of bureaucratic collectivization. On September 29th, 1933, in a secret session, Mowinkel, Norwegian Foreign Minister and officiating President of the League of Nations, read a letter to the Council of the Ukrainian Aid Committee asking that the committee should organize assistance as quickly as possible for the starving Ukrainians. On December 5th, 1935, the *Pravda*, in writing of the Kuban, let slip a reference to the famine whose existence had long been officially denied; and in its numbers of December 25th, 1935, and May 16th, 1936, the *Izvestia* officially recognized the existence of the calamity.

The evidence? No less than 40 per cent. of the population of certain regions of the Ukraine and White Russia died as a result of the famine. In all 6 million people died in Ukraina (Harry Lang in the *Forward* of February 13th, 1936, and the following numbers). Adam J. Fowdul estimates the number of dead at 8 millions in Ukraina and Northern Caucasia. The estimate of the *Socialisticheskaya Viestnie* is more cautious and puts the total at 5 millions only. But Balitski, head of the G.P.U., puts the number of deaths at 8 millions in Ukraina alone. The People's Commissar, Petrovski, declared the total to be 3 millions.

"The silence of the Press is a curious phenomenon of contemporary Russia. The official censorship controls the wires and ruthlessly mutilates the despatches of foreign correspondents, permitting only extremely cautious references to 'alimentary difficulties' to pass. The peasants strive to reach the big urban centres to buy bread

there—the bread which the State has taken away from those who produced it” (Luciani, p. 144).

The American correspondent, Louis Fischer, who was definitely favourable to the Soviet régime, also mentions the famine (Fischer, p. 149). Henri Membré describes how when his train came to a stop between stations it was assailed by famished children and grown-ups. This sort of thing happened all along the line throughout the Ukraine, he tells us; it happened on the most fertile soil in Europe during an exceptionally good season. An anti-Fascist Italian, whose name we must not reveal, told us personally: “In 1932 people were dying on the streets. I saw them with my own eyes.” And Andrew Smith writes: “At Saratov I saw a woman and three children dead on the pavement surrounded by a passive crowd” (Smith, pp. 159-60).

A. Ciliga, a member first of the Italian and then of the Russian Communist Party, writes:

“In a prison in which Khirgisians were detained the famished men ate the flesh of their dead comrades, and for weeks corpses were concealed in order to draw their ration of 200 grammes of bread. . . . Hundreds of thousands of human beings wander through the countryside without food and without a roof” (Ciliga, p. 229).

And Victor Serge: “From 1930 onwards famine extended over the country like the plague; the people made bread of clay; they ate grass and bark. The little children have stomachs like balloons. Epidemics are interminable: typhoid fever, spotted typhus spread by fleas (there is no soap to wash with), dysentery and cholera. Whole countrysides (I have been there) are ravaged by malaria. There are no medicaments available” (Serge, p. 204).

And another witness; no less a source than the *Pravda* of August 6th, 1934, informs us that whole regions in the Ukraine and in Northern Caucasia depopulated by the famine have been repopulated by peasants transported from the arid regions of White Russia.

All available witnesses are in agreement on the facts: Garrat Jones, the former secretary of Lloyd George; the Czech historian, J. Slavik; the American doctor, J. Robinson, a former member of the Friends of the Soviet Union; and the British correspondent, Malcolm Muggeridge. The country was ravaged by famine. The people in the affected areas were swollen and covered with sores. “They ate the leaves off the trees; they peeled the bark off tree trunks to eat, and they made a mess of sawdust and bad herbs to eat” (Drabovitch, in the *Mercure de France*, pp. 183-92).

Summing up the most conservative estimates, the conclusion cannot be avoided that about 8 million inhabitants of the Soviet Union died as a result of the famine caused by the enforced

collectivization. And because to have done so would have been to admit the social failure of its famous Five-Year Plan, the Soviet Government refused to appeal for foreign aid.

Upshot of a Régime: a Hecatomb of Corpses

"Stalin, the great and wise, is an example of respect and solicitude for mankind. Mankind, in the country of the Soviets, is the most precious capital." Journal de Moscou, November 15th, 1938.

We can now conclude our investigation with a very simple calculation.

Two essential figures have emerged from our study. From 1928 to 1939 there were always at least 7 million Russians permanently in prison or concentration camp. In all 17 million Russians perished: 8 millions as the result of conditions in the camps and prisons, 1 million as victims of the mass shootings, and 8 millions as victims of the great famine.

How many children would those unfortunates have had in normal circumstances? We can calculate the figure approximately from the following information. The birth-rate in the Soviet Union represents 3.5 per cent. of the total population, or 4.2 per cent. of the adult population. The excess of births over deaths represents an annual growth of the population amounting to 2 per cent.

If we consider the fact that these 7 million imprisoned or interned Russians were perpetually renewed, and that they therefore constituted a representative sector of the adult Russian population, we can estimate their progeny in ten years as being 3 million children (4.2 per cent. of ten times 7 millions). With regard to the normal progeny of the second contingent of 17 millions of victims of all ages and both sexes, of which a fraction would have died a natural death in any case, we can make an estimate on the basis of the rate of growth of the population (2 per cent.) for a period of six years, the majority of the deaths having taken place during the famine of 1933. In this way we obtain a further 2 million children (2 per cent. of six times 17 millions).

Our total works out at: *5 million children less, and 17 million deaths as the result of political repression and famine*, which gives us *22 millions* in all—a figure not far short of the 25 millions calculated by foreign statistical experts. We can accept it with safety.

Seventeen million deaths; 8 million caused by the famine and 9 million by political repression pure and simple. How sadly eloquent is such an enormous figure! It settles once and for all the long discussion about the merits of the Soviet régime. In face of such a figure, all reasoning seems futile, almost cruel.

The last resort of the defenders of Stalinism when they are compelled to recognize the tragedy of the Soviet terror is to talk about

the horrors of the Czarist régime, from which the Soviet régime, after all, saved the Russian people. For those who use this argument we must draw up another balance, that of Czarist political repression, a balance well established by Russian publications hostile to the old régime.

Compared with the 7 million permanent political prisoners in the camps and gaols of the Soviet Union, the total number of political offenders deported under the Czarist régime in 1910, which saw the peak point of the Czarist wave of repression, was 22,570 (A. Valentine and D. Ibankov). And as for the disciplinary régime, it is described as follows by Lenin's wife:

"In fact, the deported politicals were not under surveillance at all. Lenin, who was deported to Siberia in 1897-9, went hunting, visited the neighbouring villages, and was able to obtain all the books and periodicals he desired" (Krupskaya, pp. 27-8).

Most of the revolutionaries profited from their exile by improving their education, and they could attempt to escape without incurring the death sentence in the event of failure. Many Russian revolutionaries of all political schools escaped more times than the half a dozen of which Stalin is so proud. And, finally, the mortality amongst the exiles was very low.

Compared with the millions who lost their lives as victims of Stalin's political repression in the years from 1928 to 1939, 102 persons were executed for political offences under the Czars in the years from 1826 to 1905. During the four years which followed on the 1905-6 Revolution, "the black reaction" cost the lives of 4,352 persons, making a total of 4,500 political executions in the years from 1826 to 1910. This, of course, does not include deaths which took place during the actual revolution.

Thus, Czarism and its police, though they appear almost idyllic compared with Stalinism and its G.P.U., nevertheless brutally suppressed liberty of thought. If we call the old régime back to mind, it is not from any feeling of regret for its passing, but in order to use it as a standard of infamy. The fact is that by his massacre of his officials alone, Stalin outdid ten times, twenty times—within the space of one year—all the repression carried out by Czarism against all sections of Russian society during the course of almost a century. And for the political massacres committed against his own people, Stalin easily beats Hitler's record; easily beats the record of all political régimes both past and present. It is impossible to find a point of comparison in all the history of mankind.

The Decline of Civilized Instincts

Whilst the volume and intensity of the political terror has been multiplied 1,000 times in passing from the hands of the Czar into the hands of Stalin, the hostility of world public opinion towards

the terror has been divided by 10,000. The indignant protests which arose before the First World War when the Czarist Ochrana persecuted a single Nihilist student have been forgotten, and with them the protest meetings, and the interventions which took place repeatedly in all the Western countries at the least attack on the Russian political opposition. The Populist, Vera Figner, the author of numerous terrorist attempts against Czarist authority, was saved from death by the pressure of liberal public opinion abroad, and so also was Maria Spiridonova, who had killed a police official, and was glorified, comforted and morally avenged in flaming articles in the Press of the outside world for the ill-treatment she suffered at the hands of those who arrested her.

But to-day the master of terror, the man responsible for a fortress concentration camp of 20 million people, is applauded in the cinemas of Paris and London when his face appears on the screen. Years ago Czar Nicholas was booed when he came to Paris because he had sent a few thousand political opponents to exile in Siberia—from which they escaped at their leisure.

Our civilization seems to be doomed to slide downhill to its final and complete destruction. The more the blood of its children is shed, the colder its heart seems to become, and the more impenetrable its conscience. The process is dangerously accelerated by a sophism which is spread with insistence by certain cynical defenders of the Soviet régime. That sophism must be exposed. Faced with overwhelming proof of Stalinist atrocities, these "realists" are compelled to abandon the line of indignant denial, and instead they adopt a blasé nonchalance, shrugging their shoulders and declaring that terror exists at all times and under all political régimes, citing the Negroes lynched in the United States, the strikers beaten up by policemen, the natives flogged by white colonists, and so on. Let the blood of the weak be once shed by the strong, and our good apostles, suddenly scrupulous, conclude that the original sin of all human society is consummated in all its gravity, and that in consequence the capitalist régime and the Soviet régime are on an equal footing in this respect.

Not so fast! A first step in human progress away from barbarism is taken when political violence is, if not abolished, then at least held up to obloquy. And in those capitalist countries where certain men suffer maltreatment on account of the colour of their skin, or because they have made awkward social claims, all those who count themselves enlightened raise their voices in indignant protest, and they enjoy the right to do so, so much so that often they succeed, without great difficulty, in rallying a majority of their fellow citizens to their side, often winning over established institutions, and causing them to take their place under the banner of liberal and generous principles. But in the Soviet Union the

contrary is true; political violence is all-powerful—violence which has the official seal of legality, violence which is feared if not respected by the unanimous mass of the people, because none dare think of denouncing it for fear of falling victim to it himself even before he could speak freely.

But Soviet political violence enjoys another privilege even more important than that of untouchability, and that is its intensity, and it is on that point above all that there is no possibility of comparison between it and what happens under other political régimes. Certainly, the blood of a coloured man is as precious as the blood of a white man, but the blood of one man is not as precious as the blood of 10 million men, particularly when it is shed by one man alone. Nothing is more pernicious in political affairs than this affectation of "all or nothing" which leads its upholders to put all the evils of the world both large and small into the same sack on the pretext that all that really counts is the existence of evil as such. In fact, social phenomena, like the phenomena of inanimate Nature, owe their specific traits, and often their real sense, to the order of magnitude which rules them. Must Marxists be reminded that quantity is transformed into quality? Ten dismissals of workmen a day, whilst being regrettable, do no more than reveal minor irregularities in an otherwise stable economic order, but the existence of 1 million unemployed workers reveals the presence of a serious social crisis. Similarly, the legal suppression of one "incendiary publication," as reprehensible as is any attack on the freedom of thought and the liberty of expression, indicates nothing more than an authoritarian itch on the part of a democratic government, whilst the suppression of 100 oppositional journals out of 100 reveals the presence of Fascism. In the same way, a dozen *illegal* lynchings of Negroes throughout the United States (and that is the maximum in bad years) indicates beyond all question that purulent centres of infection exist in American civilization, but the *legal* liquidation by the State of 10 million Jews or Trotskyites or *kulaks* proves that there is no longer a trace of human civilization throughout the whole of such state.

Technicians are accustomed to class their results in various "quality categories," which they distinguish from each other as being "an approximation to the first order," or the second order, or the third, according to the ideal they have set themselves. Applying this common-sense method to sociology, we may consider liberal capitalism, which ensures an elementary respect for the human being in normal times, but which has not been able to eliminate the danger of wars, as "an approximation to the first order" of a civilized social régime. The evils which still persist under it if judged from the stage of zero—that is to say, from the stage of barbarism—would seem almost harmless, but, judged from

a stage already approximately approaching the ideal aim, they would justly figure as major crimes. Reformers are therefore right to concentrate the essential basis of their polemics on such evils in their endeavours to raise society to an even higher stage of perfection. But woe betide them if, in the routine exercise of justifiable criticism, their instincts atrophy to the point of making them lose their sense of proportion for the proper hierarchy of evil! Woe betide them if, fascinated by their pet formula of redemption, they fail to notice the ground shaking under their feet, the ground on which both their complaints and the superstructure of their dreams for the future are based! Woe betide them if they forget that there are more serious offences against human dignity than the ones on which they concentrate their customary anathemas!

Let us therefore proclaim the truth as loudly as possible: the Stalinist terror, the masterpiece of a régime which is no more able to guarantee peace than capitalism can, but whose fundamental aim is to transform men into things—this terror, just like the Nazi terror, cannot remotely be compared with any of those evils of democratic bourgeois society which are habitually denounced by social reformers. For, above all, it does not confine its maleficence to blocking the way to the development of human society towards its ideal, but it brutally seeks to hurl it back to zero.

In 1930 the peasant Makhaline wrote to President Kalinin (*Kraznaya Nov*, No. 11, 1930): "Our new life is like a new deluge or the universal fire." Citizen Makhaline was one of those who believed in the legend of "the workers' and peasants' power." He was deported and made to come into even closer contact with the shattering waves of the deluge and the roaring flames of the universal inferno. Seventeen million Makhalines were drowned in the flood, or consumed in the fire of this "new life." Seventeen million Makhalines were tortured and massacred within the space of ten years. Seventeen million victims by the will of the régime. Seventeen million victims of hunger, cold, exhaustion, fever and the execution squads. . . .

"Nous nous sommes arrêtés ici, où le globe nous a manqué."

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF SOVIET IMPERIALISM

"I know how much the German nation loves its Fuehrer, and thus I am happy to drink his health." Stalin: toast drunk in honour of Hitler on August 22nd, 1939.

"I express the warmest congratulations of the Soviet Government on the splendid success of the German arms." Molotov, in a communication addressed to the German Ambassador in Moscow on June 18th, 1940, on the Nazi victories in Norway and France.

(Soviet-Nazi Relations, 1939-1941, Washington, January, 1948.)

IN THE CHAPTER ENTITLED "A Cemetery of Revolutionary Ideals," we witnessed the death of the international and pacifist ideas of 1917 and the renaissance of Russian chauvinism. There were all the preliminary signs of a new imperialist policy which only awaited a favourable opportunity for full development. From 1939 onwards it was this nationalism inspired by Czarism which guided Stalin in all his undertakings, and not any ideal of social emancipation. When in our chapter on the Red Army we discussed the debt of gratitude the world owed to the Soviet Union, some of our readers no doubt thought that because the soldiers of the Red Army fought bravely against the Nazi hydra at the peril of their lives it was rather mean to refuse them our gratitude by embarrassing their leaders with a discussion of their secret motives. After all, they probably thought, what does it matter that a country joins a crusade only under the whip of circumstances and the spur of self-interest? If the crusade is holy, what does it matter if the crusaders are greedy? Unfortunately, such things do matter. When enormous national forces are at work an analysis of the real intentions behind it all is far from being a matter of critical prejudice; it must be carried out if terrible perils are to be avoided. That general rule is dramatically justified to-day with regard to Soviet imperialism.

That the Red Army fought against the enemies of democracy only under the pressure of unavoidable necessity and not out of human solidarity with the attacked peoples; that it was urged on in its efforts by greed and not by an ideal; in short, that it was not an "army of liberation" except as a subordinate outcome of Russian national egoism, are "subtleties" which had they been taken

into account betimes would have permitted us to foresee in 1941 what actually happened in 1945, when that army set up a dictatorship in the territories it occupied every bit as oppressive and implacable as the one from which it "liberated" them.

By one of those tragic and ironic violations of all reason in which human history is so rich, this new chauvinist and militarist expansionism was born of a political system established thirty years ago with the primary aim of abolishing expansionism, militarism and chauvinism; and it was let loose on the world without regard to the smoking ruins of the last cataclysm, at a time when humanity thought it had earned, and dearly earned, the right to a few decades of peace.

Some of our readers may still find it difficult to believe that a country still generally regarded as "proletarian" should return to the "bourgeois" practices it has so heartily condemned. Later on we shall try to explain why, but let us begin by establishing the fact in all its amplitude.

Lust for Territorial Aggrandizement

"We do not covet a single inch of foreign territory." Stalin.

Right from the beginning Soviet imperialism has deployed all the traditional apparatus of imperial enslavement to subjugate foreign peoples: territorial annexations overt or covert; direct or disguised economic pillage; the establishment of puppet governments; secret diplomacy; and power politics.

Territorial annexations? The Soviet Union is the only country amongst all the allied belligerents which has violated the Atlantic Charter (to which it solemnly subscribed) and made territorial annexation the beginning and the end of its war aims, and the first apotheosis of its victories. At the end of the war the Soviet Union had increased its territories by a quarter of Finland, all the Baltic States, the German province of Koenigsberg, a third of Poland, Czech-Slovakian Ruthenia, Roumanian Bessarabia and the Bukovina, the Republic of Eouva in Outer Mongolia, the Kurile Islands, Sakhalin, a part of Manchuria and bases in Korea.

The Soviet Union seized the greater part of these territories by right of conquest and in disregard of the principle of self-determination. In the best case, many months after its troops had occupied the territories and its police had deported or killed all its opponents, the Soviet Union organized "annexation plebiscites" which were subject to no kind of international control whatever—"plebiscites" whose fantastic character is revealed in the very results officially announced. Eaten up by the obsession that their triumphs must always be complete and absolute, totalitarian, in short—a typical obsession of modern dictatorships and one which betrays their

bad conscience—the Soviet authorities suddenly announced majorities of 95 per cent. in favour of joining the Soviet Union in countries which, according to Soviet statements, had the day before been full of anti-Soviet bourgeois and Fascists.

To quote only one example amongst many others, the “plebiscite” held on July 12th, 1940, in Lithuania to canvass the opinions of the Lithuanian people upon the amalgamation of their country with the Soviet Union, resulted in no less than 99.19 per cent. of all the votes polled being cast in favour, although only 0.07 per cent. of the population of the country consisted of members of the Communist Party—Smecknis, the leader of the Communist Party of Lithuania, declared at a congress that his party had 1,740 members. It is, of course, quite true that in the month which preceded this “consultation of the people” the G.P.U. had arrested, deported and shot the majority of known Lithuanian patriots. A poignant description of this wave of terror can be found in *Europe o Gengis Khan*, by Casimiro Verax (Buenos Aires, 1945, p. 209). It is also true that, not feeling sufficiently reassured by the bloody electoral prophylaxy which went before, the Soviet occupation authorities imposed the famous Soviet system of one candidate only. And it is also true that the result of the plebiscite was decided in advance at a high level before the end of the elections. In fact, due to a slip, the official Tass Agency in Moscow was unaware that the Soviet authorities on the spot had been compelled to extend the plebiscite for one day because so few electors had voted, and it announced the complete results of the election by wireless at the end of the first day, before the counting of the votes had even begun. This embarrassing fact is well known and it has been published in the British Press, and in Bernard Newman’s book, *The New Europe* (1943, p. 159).

In addition to the territories annexed, there are also the territories occupied by the Red Army, including half of Germany, the very considerable western part of which was not conquered by the Red Army at all, but by the armies of the Western Allies and subsequently ceded to the Soviet forces, and practically all the countries of Europe west of a line drawn from Stettin to Trieste, except Greece and Turkey.

In the category of territories claimed, coveted, or subjugated by the trickery of “national risings” in the style established by the Sudeten Nazis, we can include Kars, Ardahan, and practically the whole of Eastern Anatolia, the islands in the Ægean Sea, the Greek Dodecanese Islands, Italian Tripoli, Persian Azerbaijan and a part of Chinese Manchuria—not forgetting Spitzbergen.

Economic spoliation? The organized pillage carried out by the Red Army in all the territories it has occupied (Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Roumania, etc.) has filled whole columns in the

world Press. Machinery, railway tracks, telephone installations, tools, lorries, metal of all kinds, baths, utensils, toys, bridges, shoe laces—nothing came amiss. In Manchuria the Red Army did not go into action at all until the issue was already decided, and its soldiers were used not as combatants, but as squads for dismantling, loading and transporting to Russia any and every installation of any value, despite the fact that it all belonged to Russia's allies, the Chinese, whose blood and treasure had been liberally sacrificed in ten years of war.

The direct seizure of the property of the conquered and "liberated" peoples went side by side with extortion by "agreement." The Soviet Government dictated "commercial treaties" to Poland and Hungary which involved the surrender of practically all that remained seizable in the unfortunate countries. In Roumania, "joint" Sov-Rom companies have been formed to exploit the greater part of the resources of the country. The Roumanian contribution to this arrangement is the rich material wealth of the country. This counts as 50 per cent. The Russian contribution is "technique." This counts as 50 per cent. too. In addition there are the innumerable cases of undertakings "purchased" at a knock-down price with the lei which Roumania has to pay over daily to the Soviet authorities as part of the armistice terms. In Austria the Soviet Commander of the troops of occupation, General Kurasov, has laid claim (Order of June 27th, 1946) to almost the whole of Austrian industry on the ground that it belonged to the Germans. *De facto* it did belong to the Germans, but by virtue of an act of violence condemned by all civilized nations, an act which Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin decided (Moscow Conference in 1943) to annul "in all its effects."

Thus the Soviet Union now legitimizes a crime which was a model of brutal Fascist annexation, and it does so solely from a desire for material gain. It is known that this Soviet claim on the riches of Austria was one of the main causes of the breakdown of the Moscow Conference in March, 1947.

Puppet governments?

It is sufficient to enumerate the countries adjacent to the Soviet Union to have a whole list of satellite ministries. In Poland all promises that things would be allowed to return to normal have been flouted. Beirut, the President of the Polish Republic, installed in office by fraudulent elections, is a Soviet agent who did not obtain Polish nationality until 1944. The Russian G.P.U. operates at will throughout the whole country, opening concentration camps for the opponents of the Soviet régime, and arresting all and sundry at its own sweet will, including officials of the Polish Government. Until he recently fell out with Stalin in such a sensational fashion, Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia put forward or withdrew his

claims in strict accordance with the desires of Moscow. Whilst he lightly renounced the ancestral claims of the Serbs to parts of Bulgarian Macedonia now occupied by the Russians, he claimed other territories, such as the province of Trieste, from Italy, and what is even less justifiable, the province of Carinthia from Austria, herself a victim of Nazi aggression. In Roumania and in Bulgaria governments are in power which quite obviously are not in accordance with the desires of the Roumanian and Bulgarian peoples, and they are closely controlled by Russian "High Commissioners" resident in Bucharest and Sofia. And when Dimitrov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria and former shining light of the Comintern, dared to venture only a small step away from the line laid down by Moscow, he was peremptorily rapped over the knuckles by his master and hastily beat a retreat. In Czechoslovakia a Communist *Putsch* has been carried out in defiance of repeated solemn promises, and the last vestiges of national independence have been swept away.

Secret diplomacy and power politics? Recall the unbending and authoritarian attitude of the Soviet delegates to all international conferences; the insistence on the right of veto at the discussions of the United Nations; the insistence of more than one voice in U.N.O. by the trickery of so-called autonomous republics in Ukrainia and White Russia. Recall the intransigence shown by Molotov at the Conference of Foreign Ministers in London in October, 1945, in order to reduce to a minimum the number of Powers with a voice in the drawing up of the peace treaties, and in particular his efforts to exclude France. In the Soviet Union itself this Bismarckian policy has been frequently illustrated by declarations of the highest officials, including Stalin, Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovitch, glorifying military force as a normal means of international policy.

Supreme mockery and supreme melancholy: the Soviet Power, which proclaims itself as of the purest internationalism, has become the principle obstacle on the way to a world federation of peoples. Dubious patriotism is supported everywhere, even instigated by Moscow; and any proposal having as its object the unification of the world is denounced as "reactionary" in pursuance of the well-known Stalinist method which consists in adopting in the most peremptory tone possible the exact opposite of the demonstrable evidence of the traditionally accepted sense of words. In this anti-internationalist offensive, Stalin is inspired by the old adage of absolute monarchy: *divide et impera*. A world divided against itself and kept in a state of high tension by interminable national disputes is infinitely more liable to penetration by Moscow's influence than a healthy and unified world. What matters if the peoples perish provided Russian power extends? An attitude so contrary to the principles of internationalism proves that the Communists are no longer working for the triumph of these

principles but exclusively in the interests of their masters in Moscow.

After having reviewed the exploits which have marked the sensational resurrection of Russian imperialism, let us now analyse its methods and reveal its weapons.

Audacity and Opportunism

"*Dognat i peregnat*," to pass and surpass, the slogan, inspired by capitalist models, which Stalin has striven in vain to apply to the building up of his national economy, has been fulfilled with ease with regard to the destruction of international agreements.

The first clearly-defined colour on the palette of Soviet imperialism, or, rather, of all sorts of totalitarian powers, is the element of audacity. Impudence has always been one of the favourite weapons of dictators since the days of Julius Cæsar. Both Napoleon and Hitler made good use of it. It gives them an important and cheap advantage over their more scrupulous partners, an advantage which, with the admixture of a second dose of impudence, they attribute to their own genius. For at least a century now, governments controlled by public opinion have not been in a position to cast all decency and propriety overboard, and when they pursued interests not altogether admissible they had to do it *sub rosa* and always with respect for certain forms. For example, no democratic government would dare to engage itself in public and solemn undertakings with the express intention of violating them at its convenience. Democrats believed that only despots without good faith or respect for law like Hitler and Mussolini did such things, bringing back the odious precedent of "the scrap of paper." But they had forgotten a third despot. . . .

With what ostentation the Soviet Union posed as the protector of the Czech brothers! With what rolling of drums the Soviet Government celebrated the Stalin-Beneš Pact, which guaranteed the territorial integrity of Czechoslovakia! But no sooner had the Red Army set foot on Ruthenian soil than its nostrils were so filled with the smell of rich mineral deposits that this province of Czechoslovakia could do no less than integrate itself into the Soviet Union. At Teheran the Allies agreed that no one of them should conclude economic treaties with ex-enemy countries without the consent of the others. But in November, 1945, the Soviet Union signed the economic treaty with Hungary to which we have already referred, and threw the Anglo-American protest into the waste-paper basket. On January 29th, 1942, the Soviet Union and Great Britain signed a pact with the Persian Government, whose terms included an agreement by the two foreign governments to withdraw their troops from Persia within a certain period after the end of the war. March 2nd, 1946, was subsequently agreed to as the deadline date for withdrawal. The engagement was solemnly

repeated by the Soviet representatives in London in October, 1945. March 2nd, 1946, arrived and the British troops departed. Not so the Soviet troops; they remained on despite the pledged word of their Government. This incident almost compromised the peace of the world. In August, 1945, the Soviet Union concluded a treaty with China which decided the fate of Manchuria, and Stalin in person solemnly promised during the signing ceremony at the Kremlin that this Chinese province would be evacuated, with the exception of the naval base of Port Arthur, within three months after the capitulation of the Japanese. When the stipulated time arrived Soviet troops were still in occupation. A new date was agreed upon, February 1st, 1946. It arrived and found the Soviet troops still in occupation. In May, 1946, there were still hundreds of thousands of Red troops busily at work in Manchuria dismantling and carting off everything valuable they could lay their hands on.

Another example of Russian audacity is the exigence with which the Soviet Government demands the right to share the secret of the atom bomb. Weapons of war have always been kept rigidly secret. When at any time did the Soviet Government ever communicate anything to its allies concerning its military resources? Before that old rule of national reserve can be abolished, the spirit of international relations must change out of all knowledge; national sovereignties must disappear; and the world must become unified—in which case the problem of secret armaments will no longer exist, because there will no longer be any need to forge arms at all. The gravity of the danger represented by the atomic bomb in comparison with weapons which have traditionally remained secret in the past is certainly quite sufficient to justify such a revolution in international customs, but first the Soviet Government must demonstrate a sincere desire for an international *entente*. At the conference which was held on the Potomac towards the end of 1945, Truman, Attlee and Mackenzie King gave an irreproachable reply to Soviet pretensions in this matter: we will give you the secret of the atomic bomb on the day you open all your factories to international control, as we are prepared to do ourselves. There was no reply whatever to that offer.

Since then the offer has been repeated in a still more generous form. In his well-known plan, Baruch even went so far as to propose the creation of an international pool for atomic research. But as whatever formula was adopted necessarily included some system of control which would have made it possible to penetrate into all the nooks and crannies of Soviet life, they were always rejected by the Moscow Government, which was thus unable to avoid providing an indirect but striking proof of its bad conscience. It was compelled, in effect, to demonstrate that it would rather suffer frustration than control, that it would rather let the world

be torn by the anxieties of atomic threat than risk revealing what went on inside its own secret lair.

In certain cases audacity borders on cynicism. The Russians pose as the enemies of colonialism and denounce the Dutch attempts to retain Indonesia, but at the very same time they themselves demanded a colony—namely, Tripoli, though in the end they abandoned their claim. Remember how the Soviet Government thundered against British intervention in Greece (an intervention, perhaps, to be condemned, but one mild enough to permit Greek Communists to insult British soldiers with impunity) whilst the Red Army imposed a system of bloody oppression on all the peoples whose territories it occupied. When certain English Conservatives lent support to the Italian royal family, without in the least prejudicing the political activities of the Italian republicans by any exercise of force, the world resounded with Moscow's indignant denunciations. And at the same time the Russians were intriguing to put the most Fascist king in Europe back on his throne—Carol of Roumania. Though here again they had to abandon their aim in the end.

Who has not been asked to condemn the magnanimity certain Anglo-American generals are alleged to have shown to former Nazi leaders? But was it not the Soviet Government which first gave the world an example of the use of Nazi leaders? What about the famous "Free German Committee" in Moscow, which included many of the leading German generals taken prisoner by the Russians, and some, like General von Paulus, who had been members of the old guard of the Nazi Party?

It was an easy matter for General Marshall to prove at the conference of the Big Four in Moscow in March, 1947, that the zone least "de-Nazified," and the one in which the greatest number of former Nazi leaders still held responsible posts, was the zone under Russian control. In Hungary the first President of the Council installed by the Soviet authorities was General Bela Miklos de Dalnok, a man personally decorated by Hitler. His War Minister, Janos Voeroes, was also a well-known and ardent Nazi propagandist. In Roumania the head of the Government patronized by Moscow, Groza, a banker, and a big landed and industrial proprietor, was an old supporter of the party of General Antonescu, the Roumanian quisling. Colonel Radu Ionescu, formerly well known as a leader of the Roumanian torture organization, Siguranza, a man who made himself notorious during the German occupation for his massacre of Jews and democrats, has found his services most acceptable, and Groza has appointed him head of the Roumanian Secret Police. Similarly, the Vichinsky Government in Bucharest is full of Ministers who were formerly members and supporters of the "Iron Guard," such as Michael Ralea, Ambassador

to Washington. The U.S. Press has recently published a photo of this gentleman showing him in S.S. uniform giving the Hitler salute at a parade in 1942.

Yet despite all these notorious facts public opinion continues to believe that in the matter of de-Nazification it is the Western Allies who have proved themselves namby-pamby and the Soviet authorities who have shown themselves inflexible.

The Treatment of Subject Populations

Generally speaking, the attitude of the Soviet occupation authorities towards the population of the occupied countries is not at all calculated to protect and favour the poorer sections of the population at the expense of the former privileged classes, as is generally believed abroad. Amongst the latter it is only those intimately connected with the former governing élite, and in particular the intellectuals and the political leaders of liberalism, who are exposed to systematic hostility on the part of the Soviet authorities. On the other hand, those members of the ruling classes whose direct function was to hold down or mislead the masses of the people, such as police prefects, officials, administrators, propagandists and hack writers—in short, the specialists of totalitarian domination, who served the practical requirements of the previous system of control, propaganda and oppression (a system for which the Soviet authorities have just as much use as the Fascist dictators)—were left at their strategic posts and had nothing to fear on account of their past, provided they consented to make a formal kowtow to their new masters and publicly sing their praises.

In this matter—we refer to the treatment of political elements—we must admit that the Soviet authorities merely perpetuate the custom established by bourgeois imperialisms in the past. There was always a great discordance between the theses put forward in the metropolis for internal use and the forces set to work to uphold the interests of the metropolis outside. But bourgeois imperialism was content to remove the indigenous liberal elements from their positions or, at the utmost, imprison them. Soviet imperialism goes much farther: it massacres them.

Stalin's policy does not confine itself to imprisoning or interning its enemies; it kills all Liberals in the Baltic States; it kills Socialists and members of the Polish "Bund"; it kills Agrarian Democrats in Poland, Bulgaria and Roumania, and the Left-Wing Radicals in Yugoslavia; in fact, it kills all those who for the past thirty years have fought, often under extremely hazardous conditions, against Fascist feudalism in Central and Eastern Europe. Such people are not only bitterly persecuted, but they are slandered and bespattered. The Soviet authorities deliberately charge upright men, well known for their anti-Fascist activities, as war criminals and Fascist agents.

Dallin estimates that the first wave of Soviet repression in the Baltic States, Poland and Bessarabia in 1940 cost the lives or liberty of approximately 12 per cent. of the total population, and he stresses that the main contingent amongst this vast mass of victims was formed by the democratic élite (Dallin).

According to officials of the Lithuanian Legation in Buenos Aires, during the first period of Soviet occupation in 1940-1 the G.P.U. burned 420,000 books taken from public libraries, and deported more than 60,000 persons, most of whom were well known for their ardent democratic and pro-Allied sentiment (Verax, pp. 15, 32). During the second Russian occupation, the nightmare, which had not diminished under Nazi occupation, became more horrible than ever. The Canadian Member of Parliament Pethrick, who travelled through Lithuania in 1945, wrote that the N.K.V.D. (read: G.P.U.) was arresting democrats and patriots, deporting them to Siberia, and "liquidating" them to an alarming extent. Amongst those shot were even members of the pro-Soviet "People's Parliament" (*Weekly Review*, January 11th, 1945).

On November 1st, 1944, the Lithuanian Minister at Washington, P. Zadeikis, protested in an official note to the Department of State against "persecutions, deportations and shootings without trial." Casimiro Verax estimates that 200,000 Lithuanians were deported during the second wave of terror in 1944-5. The barbarous circumstances of this G.P.U. hunt against supposed opponents and the cruel conditions under which the human freight was transported like cattle to Siberia were described in a statement made by the Lithuanian Red Cross to the International Red Cross on July 20th, 1941, and in the *Appeal to the Conscience of Mankind*, issued on September 9th, 1945, by the Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania, which represents thousands of Lithuanians resident in America. The appeal is one long, heartrending protest against the Soviet terror, the seizure of property and, above all, the mass deportation of peaceable inhabitants to the fatal steppes of Siberia and Central Asia.

The Soviet authorities carry out their deportations without consideration to age or sex. Old men, women and children are amongst the deportees. Husbands are separated from their wives, and mothers from their children, even their babies. The victims are transported in cattle trucks, and when there is insufficient rail transport they are sent off on foot. Barefooted and in their shirt sleeves, for many of them were robbed of their coats and shoes by Russians, themselves poorly clad, carrying their poor bundles on their backs, hungry, exhausted and despairing, the victims straggle along the endless tracks which lead into the tundras, falling exhausted in the mud, dying of cold like flies in the winter,

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dropping under the bludgeon or bullet which is the answer of their captors to the least protest. Sometimes these poor wretches are shot in heaps by machine-gun fire (*Latvian Information Bulletin*, Washington, October, 1944).

"If only the international journalists could see that," exclaims Casimiro Verax, "and if only those who had seen had courage enough to denounce the atrocities before world public opinion! Who will take up the cause of these pitiful columns of modern slaves, decimated by exhaustion and repression? When will they call just one international conference amongst so many to prohibit and denounce the deportation of this human merchandise, the tearing of men, women and children away from their homes to send them thousands of miles away to their doom?"

The other Baltic States have been treated no better than Lithuania. The *Weekly Review* of February 8th, 1945, gives details concerning the fate of Esthonia. During the first wave of Soviet repression in 1939-40, 61,000 people were deported, 32,000 mobilized, 7,000 imprisoned and 1,200 shot, making a total of 101,200 victims out of a total population of 1,100,000 inhabitants. At the time of the re-Sovietization of Esthonia in 1944-5, less than 1 per cent. of those deported were allowed to return to their homes, but in the second wave of repression another contingent of victims was despatched to strengthen the first. The International Red Cross has not the right to send a message to Esthonia or to receive one.

In Sweden alone there are at the moment no less than 26,000 Estonian refugees. During the public discussion organized in London on February 11th, 1946, by the British League for European Freedom of the difficult problem raised by the refusal of so many Soviet citizens to go home, Dr. Aruja declared: "Only sixteen persons out of 110,000 Soviet Estonians at present outside their country have asked to be repatriated. . . . The Russians are arresting and deporting. . . . It is a deliberate liquidation of a whole people." And another witness, Captain Frolack, declared: "Whilst crossing Siberia, I saw thousands of my fellow countrymen working under horrible conditions, famished and dying of cold."

A devastating document came into the hands of the *Latvian Information Bulletin* and was immediately published as a photostatic copy. Its contents officially confirm all this startling evidence. It is headed "Instructions for Deportations," and it is signed by Serov, Third Commissioner at the Soviet Ministry of the Interior. It is preceded by a letter dated May 31st, 1941, No. 4-9174, signed by Merkurov, Minister of the Interior of the Soviet Union, instructing Major Gladkov, Public Security Officer for Lithuania, to follow Serov's instructions strictly. The following are extracts from the full text, which can be read in *Res Publica*, December, 1946:

"The official responsible for the deportations in a particular

district must be informed of the nearest point at which military reserves are available and can be called upon in the event of certain excesses taking place. . . . Care must be taken to see that members of operation groups are in possession of arms and ball cartridge, and that their arms are in perfect working order. Arms must be loaded and ready for use. . . .

"Operations must commence at dawn. . . . Persons to be deported may take with them smaller tools for the purposes of their trade, but at loading time care must be taken to see that such persons do not use their tools for the purpose of offering resistance. . . .

"No crowds whatever must be allowed to gather.

"If a wanted person refuses to open his door, it must be broken down. . . .

"The departure of each family to the station must be carried out within two hours at the most. . . .

"Having regard to the fact that a great number of the deportees (heads of families) must be arrested and placed in special camps, whilst their families will have to go to other places, care must be taken to see that nothing is said at first about this separation.

"It is only at the railway station that the head of the family will be separated from his kin and placed in a specially reserved wagon. . . . All conversation between deportees and passers-by must be prohibited. . . . The railway station will be surrounded by soldiers of the Army and of the People's Commissariat of the Interior.

"When a wagon contains the specified number of persons it will be closed."

In the martyrology of the peoples subjected to Stalin, the countries which are merely occupied just manage to escape some of the worst rigours reserved for those countries which have been annexed. Thanks to the last slender vestiges of "inter-Allied guarantees," certain democratic personalities in the occupied countries particularly well known in London and Washington have to be treated with a certain amount of circumspection, and thus they are able to let the West hear a few pathetic echoes of the tribulations suffered by their fellow countrymen under Soviet rule. In this way, Dragolioub Yovanovitch was able to deliver two courageous speeches in the Yugoslav National Assembly on December 12th, 1945, and July 8th, 1946, the text of which he subsequently sent to the review *East Europe*. Whilst at the Sorbonne, Yovanovitch was the author of a definitely Marxist thesis on the labour product; he was always an ardent supporter of the cause of Communism in his own country, and as a staunch defender of the Soviet Union he fought in the front ranks of the struggle against Nazism. However, he found it impossible to withstand the cry of his own conscience at the new martyrdom of his country:

"Reactionary totalitarianism has returned and triumphed under the ægis of the police state. . . . The institution of *zadrougas* ['public accusers'], and the elevation of denunciation to the rank of a social duty, which existed nowhere but in Soviet Russia, is particularly odious to the Serbs, who were the first people to liberate themselves from Oriental feudalism. . . . This institution characterizes régimes which fear the people. The 'public accuser' is ever present and all powerful in every village and in every district. He is a lawyer and a politician, an economist and an artist, a writer, a doctor and a veterinary surgeon. He knows everything; he can do everything, and he wants everything. . . . He is fear and he is trembling. In the eyes of the people, he is the State. . . .

"Remember that the first task of these 'public accusers' is to draw up a political register throughout the country, the so-called *Karakteristika*, which consists of secret records in which all citizens are judged and sorted into five categories: (1) Worthy of full confidence; (2) reliable; (3) acceptable; (4) unreliable; and (5) dangerous."

For this act of civic courage, Yovanovitch was arrested and sentenced on October 8th, 1947, to nine years' forced labour. Pranyo Gozi of the Croat Agrarian Party was punished for a similar offence with five years' forced labour.

In Hungary in 1945 a combination of exceptional circumstances made it possible for public opinion to express itself, with the result that the Smallholders Party led by Nagy triumphed at the polls and inflicted a resounding defeat on the Communist Party. However, the Soviet authorities soon changed the situation in their favour with brutal cynicism. Two old agents of the Soviet Union, Generals Oesterreicher and Solium, were given the portfolios for War and the Police, and within three months, under the eyes of a helpless Prime Minister, they turned their departments into appendices of the G.P.U. The newspapers of the majority were suppressed one after the other and handed over either to the Communist Party of Hungary or its affiliated organizations. The broadcasting system, placed by the terms of the armistice under the direct control of the Soviet Union, began a virulent campaign against Nagy, who was never allowed to reply to its slanders. Active democrats then began to disappear one after the other. The torture chambers opened discreetly to receive them. And, finally, at the beginning of 1947 Budapest witnessed an incredible spectacle: mixed patrols of Hungarian Communists and Soviet soldiers in uniform arrested the deputies of the majority parties, including even the leader of the party "in power." Bela Kovacs, the General Secretary of the Smallholders Party, was arrested by the Soviet authorities themselves, since when he has disappeared and is probably dead. Nagy himself was able to avoid a similar

fate only by flight. He left Hungary accompanied by his son in September, 1947.

During the deliberations of the National Assembly in Bulgaria, which lasted from November 28th to December 14th, Dimitrov's Communist Government allowed three oppositional speakers to take the floor, Petkov, Lulchev and Stoyanov. They were given one hour all told to say what they wanted to say. The following are extracts from the speech of Petkov:

"The terror is becoming more and more general. Invariably those arrested are representatives and organizers of the Bulgarian National Union of Peasants. They fill the concentration camps against which the Patriotic Front has always fought. . . . The terror has increased in such measure that the opposition refused to take part in the elections of November 18th, 1945, because the most elementary conditions for the free expression of the will of the nation were lacking. All the threats made before the elections of November 18th were carried into effect afterwards: withdrawal of rations, unjustified confiscations, internments, violence and even assassination."

Petkov then recapitulated certain cases of violence which characterized the following elections, those of October, 1946, which were organized to appease Anglo-American protests:

"A few days before the elections Zamfer Filipov, the candidate for Berkovitz, and Ludmila Slavova, the candidate for Nova Zagora, were attacked and beaten up. Zamfer Filipov died this morning of his injuries. . . . Ludmila Slavova was kept miles away from Nova Zagora and beaten. Such an incident is sufficient to discredit any election. . . . Shall we now speak about the sixteen fresh graves of persons belonging to the Peasant Party? Shall we now speak about the falsifications, about the destruction of newspapers and electoral panels, about the distribution of incomplete voting papers, about the kidnapping of our representatives, about the threats made to people who are still on the run in the streets of Sofia without a roof over their heads? Is there any further need for proofs of the political terror? Manol Zagrafov, the candidate for Kharmanli, was beaten up before the elections. Whilst confined to bed on account of his injuries, he received a burial certificate from the local authorities bearing the stamp of the Communist Party. Here is the certificate in question." Petkov then showed the document to the assembly (*Res Publica*, April 5th, 1947).

This, and other great acts of civic courage, cost Petkov his life. On September 22nd, 1947, the leader of the Bulgarian Agrarian Party was hanged despite the indignant protests of the Governments of Great Britain and the United States, and the shocked embarrassment expressed by the French League for the Rights of Man, which is under Communist control. The terrorist character of this

political crime can be seen from the fact that six days after the arrest of Petkov, the sixty-five deputies of the Agrarian Party were forbidden to enter the Parliament to which they had been elected, all their property was confiscated, and they were threatened with death. On October 29th, 1947, General Stanchev, who was sentenced to death under ex-King Boris for his courageous fight for democracy in Bulgaria and who was the leader of the subsequent military resistance against Hitler, was sentenced to imprisonment for life.

After having travelled around in Bulgaria in 1945, a few months after the Soviet "liberation," Mark F. Ethridge, an American investigator sent by President Truman, declared that the unfortunate country was just as much studded with concentration camps as it had been under Hitler. He declared that he had seen eleven such camps personally. The correspondent of the *New York Times* telegraphed on February 9th, 1945, that all Americans resident in Turkey felt humiliated at the passivity Washington had shown towards the condemnation as "war criminals" of the leaders of democratic Bulgaria, Nicolas Mustanoff, Athenas Burof and, in particular, Dimiter Gitcheff, who had been the soul of the illegal resistance to Hitler.

The review *New Leader* of New York quotes the evidence of numerous witnesses to show that in Poland the Soviet authorities have even re-opened the sinister concentration camp at Auschwitz, and that more than 60,000 of their political opponents, including tried and trusted democrats and Polish Socialists who covered themselves with glory by their heroic resistance first to the national tyrant Pilsudski and then to the foreign tyrant Hitler, are now being tortured by the executioners of the G.P.U. in fraternal alliance with former members of the Nazi Gestapo.

Mikolajczyk, former President of Poland and now a refugee in London, who entered the Warsaw Government on the basis of formal agreements come to at Yalta, subsequently confirmed at Moscow, guaranteeing full political liberty to him and his party, saw himself compelled to make a dramatic declaration two weeks before the "plebiscite" of 1946. His declaration was suppressed in Poland, but transmitted to the world by an American Press correspondent (*Time*, June 17th, 1946). According to Mikolajczyk, the Polish Peasant Party he represented in the Government, the traditional party of Polish democracy, born of the revolution of 1848, which shared with the Polish Socialist Party the glory of Polish resistance to Hitler, had been crushed by Soviet repression. Its leaders had been deported, its offices closed down, and its representatives banned from all election meetings. All the members of the Executive Committee of the Peasant Party in Breslau had been arrested. Numerous arrests had taken place in Lublin. In

Poznan the police had arrested 3,000 members of the party in the last four days before the election. Members of the German minority had been recruited as *provocateurs*; provided with membership cards of the Peasant Party, they served as a pretext for the authorities to accuse members of the party of pro-Nazi tendencies. The terms of the Yalta agreement had been openly violated. Finally, Mikolajczyk confided an anguished message to an American traveller for his wife and son, who were in England: "I no longer hope to be able to see you again. I may be deported. I may be killed."

The parliamentary elections in Poland on January 19th, 1947, saw the deployment of methods which have since become classic: physical terror against the opposition; censorship and the falsification of texts; the creation of innumerable satellite parties and organizations; fraud in the lists and in the voting; and violation of the secrecy of the poll. All independent observers were in agreement that the elections were a farce, and the Allied powers then refused to recognize the validity of the results.

Finally, in October, 1947, Mikolajczyk had to flee the country secretly to save himself. And that was the last shudder of life left in the derisory residue of democratic legality in Poland.

On November 12th, 1947, the old leader of the democratic peasants party in Roumania, Julio Maniu, was dragged before the courts and convicted. It is interesting to note that Petrescu, the judge who passed sentence, was Inspector-General of Roumanian concentration camps during the alliance with Hitler.

In Czechoslovakia the relative liberty left to the people after the "Liberation" was suddenly suppressed in the two days, February 24th and 25th, by a *coup d'état* on Nazi lines. Since the night of February 24th mass arrests, pitiless man-hunts, confiscations and the summary execution of democrats have delivered up the unfortunate Czechs to the Soviet terror. Arriving in London on August 29th, 1948, after having fled secretly from his country, Dr. Peter Zenkl, sixty-four-year-old former Czech Deputy Prime Minister, declared: "My six years in the Nazi Buchenwald concentration camp were not so bad as the six months my wife and I have suffered since the Communist *coup d'état*. Since they came my life has been constantly in danger" (*Daily Mail*, August 30th, 1948).

These plain facts will surprise only those who persist, in the teeth of all evidence, in regarding Stalin as the standard-bearer of the people's cause. For those who know the true nature of his régime, it will appear logical that the dictator who oppresses and gags 180 millions of his own people has no intention of granting freedom of criticism and independence to the 40 million foreign slaves over whom he now rules. But what is truly extraordinary is that with such a record the Soviet Government still dares to pose as a heroic, anti-Fascist force.

A heroic, anti-Fascist force? One might grant that description to the courageous partisans of Stalinism who rallied the underground resistance to Hitler throughout Europe. One might grant that description to the soldiers of the Red Army who fought like lions against the enemy. But to the Moscow Government? Never! They should be thankful if they are granted the right to keep quiet, in the hope that the people of the world may forget their record. It would be the height of absurdity to permit them to lecture to us now on the lessons of democracy. It was they who, by their pact with the Nazis in August, 1939, let loose the Hitler hordes over Europe. It was their leader who, in August, 1939, drank a toast to Hitler's health, the well-beloved *Fuehrer* of the German people. It was they who sent their soldiers to mingle with the Nazi troops in the towns of Poland. It was they who congratulated Hitler in June, 1940, on his victories over Norway and France. Never let us forget their open fraternization with the Nazis. Compared with that, the most "reactionary" aberrations of British or U.S. diplomacy were nothing but harmless foibles. The evidence given at the Nuremberg trials showed that during all the two years of this monstrous alliance the Soviet Union showed eagerness to please its Fascist partner. Right up to the eve of the rupture, Stalin furnished Hitler with all the economic assistance agreed to "with exemplary meticulousness"; so much so that the Nazi officials regarded Russian assistance as "a contribution of considerable value to German military strength" (statement of von Ribbentrop, March 25th and 26th, 1946; the Report of the American Prosecutor, Alderman, published in all newspapers in December, 1945; and the U.S. White Book on Russo-German Relations).

Thus the Soviet leaders were not even playing a double game, though, to palliate the crimes of their idol, the fanatical partisans of Stalin never ceased to insist with naïve assurance that such was the case. There was not even a minor "involuntary" delay in deliveries, or an occasional breakdown caused by some "regrettable inadvertence." No. Stalin approached Hitler with his heart on his sleeve and his resources on a plate. And yet these materials came from territories completely controlled by Stalin and free of all German interference, whilst at the same time the heroes of the underground resistance movement in other countries were sabotaging war production under the eyes of the Gestapo and at constant peril of their lives.

Fifth and Sixth Soviet Columns

Another method dear to all totalitarian régimes, because it gives them an important trump in their expansionist game against the rest of the world, is also used by Soviet imperialism: propaganda and political infiltration.

Like Hitler, Stalin keeps a fifth column in every other country—that is to say, a network of paid agents who carry out at his orders, not merely the classic mission of espionage, but also the modern work of political sapping. This Soviet “fifth column” operates as zealously as did its Nazi forbear with corruption, deception, intimidation—and even murder. Agents of this fifth column have been taken *in flagranti* in Ottawa, Washington, London, Korea, Indonesia and Chile.

They were hunted down and taken because they directly threatened the interests of the Western Powers. But who will ever unmask, arrest, try and condemn those agents of Stalin who assassinate former Soviet subjects who have fled from Russia, those who assassinate even loyal supporters of Stalin if some perfidy of the G.P.U. has come to their knowledge, those who liquidate Communists who go over to the opposition, those who assassinated the French Communist Deputies Gitton, Valat and Piginnier and attempted to assassinate Dewez, Parsal, Benenson and so many others, most of whom were members of the anti-Nazi underground during the war, but who denounced the pact Stalin made with Hitler in 1939?

Another and even more powerful weapon in the hands of Stalin is his “sixth column.” We refer to that immense cohort of benevolent and disinterested supporters of Stalinism, the convinced admirers or the fashionable adulators (who are no less impassioned). Together with the Red Army and the G.P.U., this great body of sympathizers constitutes the chief weapon of Sovietism in its expansionist manoeuvres.

They are spread all over the world and they are to be found in all layers of society, carrying on their active and fanatical work. There are Stalinist ministers, financiers, scientists, ambassadors, poets, aristocrats, generals and prelates. Stalinism exists to-day as readily in the salons as in the suburbs. In France, for instance, nine-tenths of the responsible research physicists of the official Atomic Energy Commission, including its Director, Joliot-Curie, are members of the Communist Party. There is not a nook or cranny in the life of the Western nations, even the most important and the most secret, in which Stalinists are not zealously at work. In particular they have penetrated into those organizations which have to do with the diffusion of ideas, such as information services, telegraph agencies, broadcasting corporations, publishing houses, newspapers, periodicals, reviews, universities, film studios, working-class organizations and parties, etc.—all of them have their “Soviet fraction.” This intelligence network at Stalin’s disposal is even more important and more efficient than his fifth column. Spies conspire in the dark, but these agents work in the light, or at least the half-light. Spies have to be paid and rewarded; these agents are inspired by an

ideal. The inexhaustible source of their strength is their conviction that they are serving the cause of the exploited people, the cause of human progress—the best of all causes.

One of the tasks of this sixth column is to hamper the liberty of action of bourgeois governments in order to bring them round finally to the ends of Moscow. Should a Cabinet Minister in any country find it necessary to oppose any design of Stalin, he finds that Stalin's cause is immediately taken up and ardently defended in a concert of intervention set up by his own fellow countrymen. Warnings to the newspapers, "questions in the House," strike threats, manifestos signed by intellectuals—every possible means is used by this sixth column to bind its own government hand and foot, to make it feel at a disadvantage towards the Soviet Union, to force it into the defensive and, if possible, into silence.

In the vast arsenal of blackmail used by the sixth column, the weapon it loves to brandish is the charge of "incitement against the peace of the world." When Stalin wants to ward off a criticism or prevent a diplomatic step he hurls an accusation against whoever is in his way which stains with the badge of infamy: "anti-Soviet intriguer." By "anti-Soviet intrigues" the Stalinists wish us to understand action designed to protect selfish economic interests and calculated to lead to war against the Soviet Union with the aim of re-establishing capitalism colonized by the City of London and by Wall Street. It is these activities, the tentacles of "reaction" stretched out against the country of "Socialism," which justify "proletarian" Russia in its mistrust of its bourgeois allies, in its self-imposed isolation in a fortified camp, and in its efforts to extend the outworks of this camp to include "Western marches" occupied and fortified by itself. Thus all resistance to the machinations of Soviet imperialism is hamstrung by the charge that it aims covertly at renewing the old *Gordon Sanitaire* which the capitalists and the "Whites" once drew around "the Country of the Toilers."

The Soviet Union deliberately exploits the prestige of its long-since vanished youth—a youth spent fighting against a reactionary hydra—to allow it to-day, when it has long abandoned all the Socialist ideals of its youth, to stigmatize all those who oppose it in any way, even if the opposition is most clearly democratically inspired, as "anti-Soviet Reactionaries." This manœuvre, cleverly combined with an exploitation of the real faults of capitalist foreign policy, gives Stalin a valuable advantage in his imperialist rivalries. Vilify the servants of the almighty dollar, denounce the past sins of the English in India, make pointed allusions to the pipe-line in connection with the Palestine problem—and it all sounds very honest, very upright and very progressive. But if other people refer to Moscow gold, or give succour to a victim of the G.P.U.

in a reception camp, or mention petroleum deposits in connection with "the spontaneous revolt in Azerbaijan"—that is another kettle of fish. It is provocative! It is obscurantist! It is reactionary! It is war provocation against the Soviet Union! How many statesmen in the countries of the Western World have been deceived and frightened by that scarecrow? How many of them have arrived at the conclusion that the first principle of political wisdom to-day is under all circumstances to avoid providing any nourishment to the famous "Russian suspicion"? One would think that the Soviet Union had been canonized, and that the least suggestion of wrong was now profanity.

An illuminating example of the function which "anti-Sovietism" has taken on in the furtherance of Russian designs was offered by the official Moscow communiqué on the Ottawa espionage affair. The Soviet Government deigned to devote ten ironical lines to defending itself from the grave charges raised against it; then it reversed the roles, turned itself from accused to accuser, and loudly charged the Canadian Government with devoting itself to an unspeakable "anti-Soviet campaign." It would be impossible to demonstrate more clearly that these charges of "anti-Soviet activity" serve the Soviet Government as a smoke screen to cover its own diplomatic intrigues when they are in difficulties—or have a special aim in view. Fundamentally, there is no difference between this procedure and that of Hitler when he justified his own acts of aggression by the alleged anti-German intrigues of an imaginary Judeo-Masonic coalition.

But the activities of this Soviet sixth column represent a mortal threat to humanity because they paralyse all liberal and humane criticism of the dictatorship and the terror practised by the Soviet Power. The fanaticism of these members of the sixth column is such that they will stick at nothing to preserve the myth of a Socialist Russia. When their taboo is involved, they will willingly support the most slanderous manœuvres of the men of the Kremlin. In their newspapers and periodicals, by their agitation and their whispering campaign, by their propagandists, long-trained in political sophism, and with their prestige as "advanced thinkers," they drown all honest criticism of the Stalinist dictatorship in a flood of defamation as peremptory as it is fantastic: Trotskyite, White Guardist, bourgeois spy, German agent, British agent, Fascist—all possible denigrating labels are used if they are calculated to intimidate those who would speak; if they are calculated to discredit those who have dared to speak.

In this way the sixth column exercises a veritable political censorship over the body of liberal opinion in the free countries of democracy. It uses the weapon of excommunication, holding its anathemas suspended over the heads of those who might speak.

It reinforces the dictatorship which Stalin exercises in Russia by policing public opinion outside.

The extent of the damage can be measured by the one tragic fact which has come about almost without being noticed: since the establishment of this new inquisition, all democratic solidarity has disappeared from the world.

Formerly when progressive elements were persecuted in this or that country, the civilized world could at least reply by organizing indignant protests in other countries against the persecutors. As soon as a fighter for human liberty was maltreated, everything in Europe worthy of the name "liberal" rose in indignant protest and exercised every possible form of pressure on the guilty government to force it to release its victim. As recently as the year 1927 a great campaign went on in all civilized countries, even to the point of bloodshed, to save two men, Sacco and Vanzetti, from an unjust sentence. Indians and Annamites who rose in defence of their liberty were, alas! machine-gunned, but on the morrow a network of democratic organizations denounced the British and French Governments even under the windows of those responsible.

To-day that healthy reflex action of civilized humanity is dead.

In Russia, in Poland, in Yugoslavia, in Hungary, in Saxony, in Brandenburg, in the heart of Europe, in the confines of Asia—everywhere, in short, where Stalin's writ runs—millions of men, women and children are suffering and dying in concentration camps every bit as bad as those of the Nazis. Amongst them are Socialists, trade unionists, Christians, liberals, simple thinkers, simple workers who love justice and liberty. And, above all, there are amazed and despairing non-political victims suffering on account of some impenetrable design of the G.P.U. There are even Communists amongst them, pure Bolshevik, Stalinist and anti-Trotskyite Communists. They have been imprisoned, interned and shot by tens of thousands. And yet in face of all these martyrs, and all these corpses, not a single democratic government shows itself worthy of its name by lodging a protest. Not a single liberal party organizes an indignation meeting of human solidarity. Not a trade union organizes even a one-hour strike in protest. Not a human conscience cries aloud. Not a leader, not a newspaper organizes a systematic campaign to succour our tortured brothers. Not a demonstration, not a question, not a shout, not even to avenge the victims if ever so little by stigmatizing their torturers and executioners.

Where are they all, the glorious League for the Rights of Man, the noble association of intellectuals against dictatorship, the committees of vigilance on behalf of liberty, the associations of women against oppression, the relief committees for the interned,

the philanthropic societies? All those who pretend to defend the independence, the dignity and the life of man; where are they? What are they saying? What are they all doing?

They all know. They all keep silent. They are all frightened, frightened of the sixth column.

The Seventh Column

The Czars made the Orthodox Church into the *Deus ex machina* of Pan-Slavism, that is to say, one of the larger pieces on the chess-board of their imperialist manoeuvres. Stalin has not failed to salvage that great idea from the store-house of the past, and it now inspires him in the restoration of the old Patriarchate of Moscow in all its former pomp and glory.

Unlike the other institutions permitted to exist in the Soviet paradise, the Orthodox Church is allowed to send its representatives abroad, and in 1946 its dignitaries sailed round the world to rally the faithful once again around the old evangelical throne, and, in effect, around the Soviet Government in Moscow.

From May 29th to June 26th the Patriarch Alexis in person, accompanied by a suite of imposing dimensions, visited the powerful Orthodox-Russian communities in the Near East. In Jerusalem, when the local Archimandrite Antoine, head of the celebrated Church of Olives, refused to recognize his authority, Alexis introduced himself into the holy edifice by surprise, took possession of all the sacerdotal funds, appointed a new priest, and in this way secured the adherence by main force of twenty thousand believers. In Egypt the reception accorded to him took on the character of a demonstration of the solidarity of the ancient Byzantine world against the West, and in particular against Great Britain. In Abyssinia, a State of very secondary importance, but Orthodox, the Soviet Government has raised its representative to the rank of Ambassador. Timochenko, who occupies the post, is said to be the first Believer to be a Soviet diplomat.

It is hardly necessary to record that Stalin's friend Tito in Yugoslavia has dissolved the Synod founded in 1920 at Karlovsky by orthodox emigrants and fugitives, and that friend Dimitrov in Bulgaria has "persuaded" the Exarch Stephan to place the Bulgarian autocephalous church under the jurisdiction of Alexis. In the month of June both France and Great Britain had the honour of receiving the Metropolitan Nicolas. His mission met with very considerable success, for more than half the members of the Czarist emigration in London and Paris agreed to return under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Moscow. In Paris the most ardent supporter of this sensational move was the Metropolitan Seraphim, who compromised himself gravely with the Nazi

authorities of occupation during the war, whilst resistance crystallized around the liberal intellectuals of the Theological Institute, despite the submission of Euologe, its head.

In October the Archbishop of Bryansk, Pothuis, travelled through Austria and Czechoslovakia, whilst Bishop Yaroslav preached the gospel in America and Canada. The aim is the same everywhere: to rally new contingents of spiritual subjects under the sceptre of Alexis, the puppet of Stalin. And everywhere the same methods meet with success: invoke the sacred traditions of the cult; wave aloft the standard of religious legitimism by proving that the election of the new Patriarch was irreproachable in its validity; win the sheep through their priests, and the priests through promises. But those lost sheep which Stalinism is now so anxious to rally, were they not but a little while before black sheep, abominable White Guards who fought against the revolutionary people with arms in their hands on the side of the foreigner? What does it matter? The forgiving of "Right-Wing errors" is a sign of political compromise only where others are concerned.

What really matters is that there are millions of new "organizable" recruits concentrated in the Slav countries and hundreds of thousands of others scattered elsewhere, and that they all represent excellent instruments for the propaganda of the Motherland, crystallization centres for Pan-Slavism, and, finally, support points of great value in the game of diplomatic pressure. A decree of June 18th, 1946, abolished all the restrictions which formerly prevented the readmission of emigrants to Soviet citizenship, and extended it to any subject of the former Czarist Empire who cared to claim it.

Proposal for Resistance to Soviet Imperialism

The persistence of fanatical philo-Sovietism in widespread circles, some of them highly respectable, is favoured as much by the adoption of certain unfortunate methods of resistance to Soviet imperialism as by Soviet propaganda itself. Nothing more effectively strengthens a misplaced loyalty than an ill-founded anathema. An example of this sort of thing was offered by Churchill, when in his determination to end three years of passivity towards Soviet expansionism he took his stand on the basis of rivalry between imperialist Powers and gave his new-found firmness an anti-Bolshevist tinge (speech in Fulton on March 5th, 1946).

Churchill's thesis is in essence as follows: the Soviet Government has decided to extend its power and its doctrine throughout the world by every possible means, including force. This expansionism threatens the historic interests—legitimate, he contends—of the British Empire and the United States. In consequence, these two

threatened Powers should form a strong alliance, including military arrangements, to check Russia's plans.

There is every reason to believe that such an attitude plays into Stalin's hands. First of all, in opposing a nascent and hungry imperialism, not by the superior principles of anti-imperialism, but by the threatened interests of an already full-grown and sated imperialism, Churchill brings into discredit the reasons which move the British and American peoples to resist Soviet expansionism. And, further, by declaring that Stalin also wants to export "his doctrine" and by letting it be understood, as it generally is understood, that that doctrine is a form of Socialism, Churchill accredits, so to speak, the motives which urge on the Soviet Union in its plans to dominate the world. Churchill has made a mistake in the century if he thinks that the prospect of defending the British Empire arouses enthusiasm, whilst the prospect of Communism causes horror. On the contrary, the great majority of people in our day feel uneasy when they are asked to take up arms to defend the Suez Canal, and if there is any effective argument to make them passive towards Russian expansionism, it is to tell them that at least such expansionism would tend to introduce a less absurd régime than capitalism. It is precisely this alleged amelioration that Russian expansionism brings about which is used by the sincere adherents of Stalinism to excuse the machinations and intrigues whose shocking character even they can see. They believe that in the end the victory of Stalinism will lead to the emancipation of the workers in those countries where they are still under the yoke of big business.

Certainly, those sympathizers with Stalinism who are men of good faith should have observed that if Soviet expansionism really had no other aim but the happiness and well-being of the peoples, it would have taken on a less military and more social character, have shown itself less greedy of material booty and more interested in securing the free consent of the populations concerned. If that were its aim, then surely it would freely invite observers into its territory to see the care it devotes to the well-being of its workers; surely it would throw open its frontiers and show the world the joy and gratitude with which the populace welcomes the Russian troops. But instead it withdraws itself sombrelly from the eyes of the world behind an impenetrable wall of isolation and censorship.

Communist opinion, contaminated by twenty years of amorality, presented as the *ne plus ultra* of politics, now readily endorses an almost incredible divergence between the end and the means, although in fact the immorality of ends can readily be revealed by the indignity of the means adopted to attain them. One of the very first tasks of any return to political sanity would be to recover the ground lost to amorality in politics, and to re-establish those

principles of honesty which democracy so insistently laboured to entrench in civilized political life. In the light of such principles, for example, all would be able to see that an enterprise as nationalistic and aggressive as pan-Slavism could not possibly be directed to an end as internationalist and pacific as real Socialism.

The key to the Russian problem is found precisely in the fact that *the Soviet régime is not a progressive régime at all*. The doctrine which this régime propagates is not Socialism at all, Churchill to the contrary notwithstanding. Stalin represents a system and pursues an aim both of which are oppressive—that is to say, they are properly homogeneous in the methods which they use, in accordance with a law constantly confirmed to the great chagrin of all those who invoke allegedly noble ends in order to cloak ignoble actions. As the means are, so is the end. As Stalinism draws the essential part of its strength in foreign countries from that “advanced” opinion which still regards it as being associated with the cause of progress, the first task of the defenders of peace is to dissipate that illusion. The danger of war will be considerably reduced on the day it becomes patent, both for the Right and the Left, that Stalinism, far from being historically favourable to the progress of humanity, is the incarnation of a retrograde and obscurantist political system. This assertion concerning the nature of the Soviet régime contains the crucial truth about the whole matter, and it must be proclaimed incessantly if we are to resolve the problems presented to the world by Soviet imperialism “without blood, without tears, and without sweat.”

Beyond all question, the Russian Revolution of November, 1917, was animated by a progressive spirit, though it was carried through with dictatorial means which in the end encompassed its ruin. Various factors combined to bring about its degeneration, which, however, did not take the form of a pure and simple return to a traditional capitalist form. Private property in the means of production, distribution and exchange was not re-established, and that is the prime reason why people still confuse the Soviet régime with Socialism. *The degeneration of Soviet society manifested itself in the formation of a new privileged class—a privileged class of a new type: the bureaucracy.* This bureaucracy collectively controls the instruments of production and the means of distribution, and it also controls the apparatus of the State. Its control is far more absolute than that of the old individual proprietors ever was, and it exploits the workers and peasants more harshly than ever they did.

Thus whilst it is perfectly true that Stalinism has destroyed the old régime of private property, it did not do so, alas! in order to replace it by a better one calculated to inspire, and worthy of inspiring, other peoples to emulation. On the contrary, the Stalinist dictatorship has become retrograde by comparison with

the modern form of capitalism under which the exploitation of the workers is ameliorated by trade-union rights, including the right to strike, and in which the privileges of the ruling classes are counterbalanced by political liberty for all.

Thus *Soviet expansionism does not serve the cause of some ultimate superiority, but purely and simply the ambitions of a new privileged class desirous of increasing its powers*—an ambition which is inevitable with any dominant class, and which is particularly aggressive with a dominant class led by a despot. The truth is that the expansionism of such a class brings the opposite of Socialism to the inhabitants of the territories it controls; not only does it contain no progressive element of any kind, but it brings them more exploitation and greater oppression.

It is right and proper, and a matter of urgency, that the enlightened sections of public opinion should oppose Soviet imperialism; and it is right and proper for the very same reasons which always made them condemn nationalistic aggression and defend the peoples who were the victims of such aggression. It is always the duty of free men to combat despotism wherever it shows itself, and no matter in what guise it presents itself, and to assist enslaved peoples no matter where they may suffer or to what flag they must bow.

It is certainly high time progressive opinion was freed from the duty of solidarity it believes it owes to the Soviet Union. It must be clearly shown the concrete, physical and terrifying dangers with which Stalinism threatens the world. We must shout loudly to the deceived men and women of the sixth column: "Stop! You are playing with death!" If the régime you desire so ardently and so irresponsibly were installed in your own country, within three months the prisons would be filled to overflowing, and concentration camps would resound with the groans of the innocent—in all probability your own. Volleys would rattle ceaselessly as the execution squads got to work, goods would be seized, peasants would be condemned to misery, and workers would be subject to forced labour and tied to the factories. Public life would be riddled by denunciation, spying and fear. Darkness would descend on the human spirit. And truly there would be "blood, and tears, and sweat."

Such progressive anti-Sovietism, animated not by motives of egoistic nationalism, but by a desire to preserve human liberty, was proclaimed by President Truman in his rousing speech to the United States Congress on March 12th, 1947. However, here too declared aspirations must be translated into practice. It is not enough for liberal capitalism to be even very much superior to the Soviet régime because it still suffers from defects whose gravity cannot fail to impress those who suffer from them daily and who are

therefore disposed to lend a favourable ear to all myths of redemption. Since a far-away State has succeeded in concealing its atrocities behind the hallucination of alleged social progress, there is no better means of de-hypnotizing its foreign admirers than giving them tangible proof of real social progress in their own country. Fundamentally, both Stalinism and Hitlerism were the outcome of the sickness of modern society, and the latter will not be able to prevent a return to barbarism unless it succeeds in cleansing its own organism. Only such efforts at reform will succeed in permanently freeing the world from the mortgage of Stalinism without risking the outbreak of a new war which would destroy what still remains of human civilization.

THE COMINTERN

"Don't worry your head about them; if they cause you the least trouble, just let me know and I will see to it." Stalin, speaking of the Lettish Communists to Selter, Foreign Minister of Latvia in December, 1939.

"ANTI-COMMUNISM" PLAYS THE same role in political discussions as "anti-Sovietism" plays in the sphere of diplomatic manoeuvres—namely, to impose silence on all criticism. Under the pretext that the political parties called communist were subjected for a long time to reactionary oppression, no man of good will is now to have the right to criticize and oppose them. Under the pretext that Hitler and Mussolini founded their political fortunes on the fear of Communism, all criticism of the political parties called communist is now to be condemned as Fascist for ever.

The idea that a direct and open struggle against these parties must involve heaven knows what fatality and turn inevitably into a reactionary and anti-progressive movement, no matter how good the humanitarian motives of those who lead it, is devoid of all foundation apart from the pressure exerted by Communist blackmail. This idea, which still restrains many Left-Wingers, already convinced of the noxiousness of Stalinism, from attacking these parties with vigour and good conscience, is all the more indefensible because for many years now it has been precisely the persistence of Stalinist influence which has most gravely compromised the interests of the working class.

Without further loss of time, we must give democratic circles sufficient confidence to make them refuse to sacrifice to Moscow their honourable privilege of flaying dictatorships. The docile servants of a tyrannical class government must no longer be allowed to exploit the moral cloak which belongs rightly only to those who continue to work for the abolition of the classes, for the safeguarding of personal liberty and for internationalism. The leading "anti-Communists" of our day are Stalin and his accomplices throughout the world.

The Domestication of the International

No one, not even an orthodox Communist, denies that the Comintern, Communist or Third International, is an obedient instrument in the hands of Stalin. The primary task of the one, always and everywhere, is to make propaganda on behalf of the

other. We shall deal with this point no further; it is quite sufficient in itself to establish the servitude of the Comintern.

The synchronization of the political changes in the line of the Comintern with the diplomatic changes carried out by Stalin is no less obvious and indisputable. The moderate policy adopted in China in 1927 went, as though by chance, parallel with the steps taken by Moscow in London to avoid an economic breach between Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Throughout the years 1930-3 the German Communist Party was patriotic up to the point of forgetting to fight against Hitlerism—and it just so happened that Moscow opposed the Versailles Treaty. And at the same time the French Communist Party was actively opposed to "French Imperialism"; the British Communist Party to "British Imperialism," and so on. At that period the main enemy of the Comintern was the Second or Socialist International, which was accused of playing the game of the Anglo-French "interventionists" against the Soviet Union.

And then on that famous day in February, 1935, when Moscow went over into the camp of the democracies, Litvinov discovered that "the displacement of a single frontier post in Europe would threaten the peace of the world," and Stalin signed the famous communiqué with Laval in which he "recognized and approved the efforts made by France to safeguard her national defence," the policy of the Comintern radically changed at once. The French Communist Party suddenly became ardently patriotic and adopted Joan of Arc, and the German Communist Party, already illegal, denounced Hitler's imperialism. And this *volte-face* was followed in August, 1939, by another one equally sudden which restored the 1932 position from the very moment that Stalin concluded his pact with Hitler; the German Communists became German patriots again, and the French and British Communists returned to their denunciations of the "imperialist robbery" alleged carried out by their own countries. But when war finally broke out, Pollitt, the leader of the British Communist Party, was caught sufficiently unawares to write a pamphlet supporting the struggle against Hitler, only to turn a political somersault a few days later as soon as he heard the whip crack ominously in Moscow.

The next violent change took place in 1941, when, despite all its efforts, the Soviet Union found itself attacked by Nazi Germany. The German Communists then turned once again against their own bourgeoisie and denounced the *diktat* of Compiègne, whilst British and French Communists began to pose as the only real defenders of their countries. And that lasted as long as the war, until, in 1946, the Soviet Government discovered that its democratic allies, the British and Americans, were, in fact, most infamous imperialists and Fascists.

The number, the suddenness and the cynicism of these political somersaults have given rise to a widespread theory that all these violent zigzags are nothing more than tactical manoeuvres around an unchanging line set towards revolution and universal well-being. What, Stalin, who exercises a definitely conservative dictatorship in the Soviet Union, is the leader of a revolutionary organization in the rest of the world? We shall do our best to show that the implied contradiction is not a real one.

We have seen that in 1927 the alliance of Chinese Communism with the bourgeois Kuomintang was broken only after the last twitches of the Revolution had ceased. In Germany during the tragic years 1930-3, during which Nazism was preparing itself for the final assault on the Weimar Republic, the Communist Party refused, right up to the grave, to conclude a truce with the Social Democratic Party. The "Reds" preferred to ally themselves with the "Browns," combining forces in a plebiscite organized against the "Pink" Prussian Government. It is difficult to believe that such an excess of hatred against a democratic party really concealed an authentic and invariable revolutionary line, particularly in view of the rank opportunism the German Communist Party displayed on so many occasions.

In France, too, Communist electoral tactics, operated under the slogan "Class against class," involved an obstinate refusal to withdraw in favour of the strongest Left-Wing candidate at the second round of the elections, and resulted in sending a Right-Wing majority back to the French Chamber in 1928, and in rendering the Left-Wing majority in 1932 very precarious. The history of the working-class movement can hardly offer another example of such obstinate and extreme sectarianism. We are obliged to conclude that all this was no accident, no temporary aberration, but the result of deliberate calculation. With a complete contempt for the interests of Socialism, Moscow is determined to turn its adherents into sectarian fanatics, and break down the strong tradition of the *bloc des gauches* in France, a tradition which tends to attach even Communists to the general democratic world. Once this policy was successful, Stalin had no further need to fear that his followers might be corrupted by contact with other working-class parties and he was able to permit "the united front" of 1935 with the French Socialist Party. Even so, when in 1936 the anti-Fascist movement in France grew so strong that it began to threaten the existing social régime, the Communist leaders did their utmost to thwart all tendencies towards any profound social transformation.

Public opinion has perhaps forgotten that in the joint committees which gave birth to the *Front Populaire* the Communists allied themselves with the Radicals against the Socialists in order to

prevent the adoption of proposals for economic nationalization and for the complete overhaul of the French political constitution. Public opinion also seems to have forgotten that the strikes of June, 1936, were broken off at Communist Party orders. When the movement was at its height, the Communist leader Thorez issued his famous injunction: "One must know when to end a strike."

And when Stalin intervened in the Spanish Civil War, the first anxiety of his agents was to destroy the social reforms which had been brought about in the Republican camp, to annul agricultural collectivization, to undermine the control exercised by the trade unions, to dissolve the popular tribunals, and to form special detachments of Red Guards in the army. The anarchists, the Marxist anti-Stalinists and the Left-Wing Socialists, who desired to wage both the war and the social revolution simultaneously, were eliminated by every possible means, including torture and physical extermination. However, it must be added that although the social policy of Stalin in Spain was definitely anti-Socialist, his military policy was seriously bent on the defeat of General Franco's armies.

When the game was finally lost, most Spanish Republicans found themselves refused the right of asylum in the Soviet Union, and Spanish Republican gold was seized by Moscow as payment for arms and equipment supplied. To preserve the secret of the real nature of his activities, which were camouflaged by his propaganda as fraternal aid to the Spanish Republicans and as Communist exploits, Stalin made a hecatomb of all his agents. Of the four Russian Generals who commanded in Spain, Goriev and Grigorovitch were shot, Grichine was arrested, and Maximov disappeared. General Uritsky, who was in charge of war supplies, was also imprisoned. Marcel Rosenberg, the first Soviet Ambassador in Spain, was shot. His successor, Gaiki, was arrested. Antonov Ovseyenko, a hero of the 1917 Revolution in Petrograd, and Soviet Consul-General in Catalonia, was arrested and in all probability executed. Michail Koltzov, *Pravda* correspondent in Spain and G.P.U. agent entrusted with watching the others, disappeared.

The last time a popular revolution was throttled by the machinations of Moscow was in Warsaw in 1944. When at the approach of the Soviet forces the Polish resistance movement rose against the Germans in Moscow and established a government with an advanced social programme in half the town, the Soviet troops were ordered to cease their advance at the very gates of the new Commune, and to wait with grounded arms until the Germans had exterminated 200,000 of their brothers before resuming their advance. Zaremba gives full details of this perfidy in his book (see Bibliography).

The Soul of Stalinist Communism

After reading this record, many people will no doubt ask how it is possible that a movement embracing so many sincere Socialists can exploit Socialist enthusiasm so cynically. Surely in their daily activity the Communist parties train their members to hate capitalism and love collectivization? To resolve that apparent contradiction, let us closely examine the everyday life of a Stalinist movement in a capitalist country.

First of all, those adherents of Stalinist organizations whose inspiration is truly Socialist, and who are still deceived into the belief that the organizations to which they belong are also Socialist, do not by any means represent a majority. The so-called "Bolshevization" of 1925 emancipated the Communist parties from that type of revolutionary humanitarian who was as much devoted to culture as to justice. His place was taken by a type already deeply affected with Russian authoritarianism, but still attached in certain ways to old working-class traditions: the type of aggressively class-conscious proletarian. After the war of 1939-45, this type of Communist died out in his turn, and the Communist parties became political conglomerations in which doctrine and principles played a more and more secondary role, in favour of mere undermining activity within the institutions of their respective countries in accordance with the fluctuating convenience of Moscow.

Political education in the Stalinist parties has lost its essential mainspring: freedom of discussion. The expression of any thought which deviates by so much as a hair's-breadth from the "party line" is immediately visited with expulsion, and the unfortunate who expressed it is vilified and abused. The dogma of unanimity clearly reveals its function in the procession of authoritarian interdicts, violence and lies, all of which are indispensable for its imposition. It closely follows the authoritarian interdicts, violence and lies used against the masses still desirous of progress, after the party has come to power. Monolithism is the legitimate father of the dictatorship over the proletariat.

The other characteristics of the Stalinist parties are no less illuminating. The basic ideas of democracy are insidiously brought into the discredit which attaches rightly to the failings of democracy. It is a remarkable fact that during the period of the *Front Populaire* the French Communist Party found itself much more at home with the bellicose traditions of the French Revolution of 1789 than with its libertarian traditions. As an illustration, the official Stalinist film dealing with the French Revolution, *La Marseillaise*, conveniently forgot the storming of the Bastille, and its general tendency was to demonstrate that even on August 10th it was discipline and not liberty which represented the mainspring of the insurrection.

Discipline is, in fact, the primary virtue which Stalinism seeks to instil; it is the leitmotiv of its whole ideology. By fanaticism the party leadership protects its infallibility from all doubt, and trains its adherents to sacrifice their individuality. By sectarianism it preserves the party from the influence and temptations other parties, more faithful to the real democratic and Socialist spirit, might exercise on it.

And, finally, Stalinism flatters its members by a kind of proletarianism on principle which idealizes the proletarian condition from which Socialism seeks to emancipate humanity, which is precisely the condition which Stalinism perpetuates. In the same way it inoculates its members against "refinements"—in other words, against culture—whose possession might allow the masses to raise themselves to the point at which they would be capable of intelligently criticizing their leaders. For an enterprise as barefaced and insolent as the parading of slavery under the flag of a libertarian doctrine it is of the utmost importance that its adherents should be blinded by hate and confused by lies—whence the systematic use of calumny, abuse and falsification by Stalinism. Those who have had first-hand acquaintance with life inside the Communist "cells" can confirm our statement that at no time and in no place has a political movement ever carried these methods to such an extreme.

If we turn our attention from the slogans of the day, which are invented according to the circumstances of the moment, to the permanent components of the Stalinist political programme, we shall discover, with some astonishment, perhaps, that Stalinism never refers in any way to the measure it proposes to put into operation after the revolution. The study of the future social organization is treated as Utopianism, and the masses are expected to be entirely content with the sole slogan of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," which is calculated to throw them into a trance in which they can hug the vague and satisfactory idea of a régime in which those who dominate them to-day will themselves be dominated in their turn. In everyday politics capitalism is harried by narrow economic demands and by the exigencies of day-to-day claims systematically overbidding the proposals of the "reformists" in order to maintain the reputation of the party for extremism. By the same token, Stalinism carefully avoids encouraging too penetrating judgments concerning the exploitation of the workers, or too great hopes after its suppression. The general tendency is not fundamentally subversive, but merely a sort of overbidding of a purely aggressive character—what Lenin called "Red economism," and what the wisdom of the ages calls "demagoguery."

In order to facilitate this kind of agitation, and ensure that it does not go beyond the prescribed limits, Stalinism always seeks

to domesticate the trade unions and bend them to its will. In the theoretical criticism of capitalism, Stalinism attaches less and less importance to the basic responsibilities of the system, and more and more to the spectacular scandals caused by particular abuses. Anarchy is more hateful to Stalinism than poverty, and favouritism than oppression. It is more vengeful than constructive, and it takes good care that its adherents set more store by discipline and order than by fraternity, that they admire ruthlessness rather than tolerance. In short, in Stalinism we are again faced with the psychology of Russian Communism, which resembles Fascism more closely than Socialism. For fear we are suspected of exaggeration, let us hear the evidence of the man most qualified to speak on the subject of fanaticism, Hitler himself, as reported by Rauschnig:

"Besides, there is more that binds us to Bolsheviks than separates us from them. . . . I have always made allowance for this circumstance, and given orders that former Communists are to be admitted to the party at once. The petty-bourgeois Social Democrat and the trade union boss will never make a National Socialist, but the Communist always will" (Rauschnig, p. 134).

One motive of the Stalinist movement, and one only, still remains revolutionary in the purely destructive sense of the term: the will to abolish private property in the means of production and to liquidate the "old-style" ruling class. But that desire is not enough to attach the honourable adjective "Socialist" to such a movement. If a "society without classes" is ever to be established, the expropriation of the private owners of capital seems necessary, but it is certainly not sufficient in itself. If that is all it can easily develop, as the Russian example shows, into the collective appropriation of this capital to the benefit of a new tyrannical class.

A misunderstanding needs clearing up. If we continue in accordance with tradition to associate the word "revolutionary" with the idea of "Socialism," then we must refuse to use it with regard to Stalinism. However, if we agree to use it to describe any violent transfer of property and any violent rupture with the former ruling class, without bothering our heads about the fate of the masses in the process, or about the intentions of the new government, then the word can be used with regard to Stalinism. We have no objection whatever to this second use of the word "revolutionary"; it is merely a matter of definition. For the sake of clarity, perhaps the best thing would be to draw a distinction between various types of revolutionary doctrine by introducing qualifications to indicate the nature of the system the revolution proposes to develop. In this way we should be able to avoid annoying confusion—for instance, the confusion which has arisen from the Soviet attitude towards the annexed parts of Poland. From the indisputable fact that in this territory the Soviet authorities have dispossessed the

old proprietors, some people have drawn the conclusion that they are "socializing" it, and in order to manage the property collectivized in this way, and to control the workers and peasants, the Red Army brings Stalin's bureaucrats, propagandists and police in its train.

When this qualification is taken into account, it is easy enough to identify the Communist or Third International as the faithful reflection of the Stalinist class régime in the Soviet Union.

Death of an International

One morning amongst so many others during the never-ending war, a morning when Moscow was enveloped in a grey, vague cold, the world learned by a report, tucked away on the third page of the newspapers, that the Comintern had ceased to exist. The following day one or two journalists well versed in foreign affairs recalled *en passant* the great revolutionary movements which had shaken Europe at the end of the previous war, whilst devoting the major portion of their observations to an examination of the advantages the measure was likely to give the Russians in the diplomatic combinations of the day. And a few solitary individuals scattered over the world, men and women long since separated from the Third International, but still the authentic vessels of its original sacred fire, silently re-lived the eternal dreams of the disappointed just. They recalled the immense hopes, born of the Russian Revolution, which inspired the élite of world Socialism and the gradual dying away of the old internationalist ideal as it came into contact with the congenital weaknesses of human society. And only twenty-five years after its marvellous birth, they were informed of the decease of the Third International in a few lines of print issued by some subordinate official in Moscow between two ordinary everyday police reports on a morning amongst so many others during the never-ending war—a morning when Moscow was enveloped in a grey, vague cold.

The manner of the dissolution provided new proof, if any were still needed, of the absolute subjection of the Communist International to Moscow. If the International had really represented—as it never ceased to claim—an organization of the workers of the whole world in their struggle for emancipation, how could it have allowed itself to be dissolved by a mere circular issued by a bureaucrat, without any preliminary debate amongst its members all over the world, and at a time when the most important of all its principles was receiving striking confirmation in the world around: the mutual rending of the peoples demonstrated, in fact, that the spirit of internationalism was far more than a cry for working-class emancipation—it was, and is, the sole hope of saving humanity as a whole.

As to the effect of the dissolution of the Comintern on the dependence of the national Communist parties, it was nil. Two months were sufficient to show that they continued to be just as much bound by the orders of Stalin as ever. And a wondering world asked itself how it was possible that so many pirouettes so slavishly synchronized with the diplomatic manoeuvres of a totalitarian government could be executed without faltering by representatives freely elected in democratic countries.

Did the Soviet Government desire to oppose the policy of Great Britain and the United States in Italy? The Italian Communist Party immediately discovered that these two Powers were stifling the revolutionary liberation of the country and at once demanded the execution of the King. Did the Soviet Government desire to bring about a reconciliation with the Anglo-American Powers? The Italian Communist Party immediately supported the Regency and entered into the government of Mr. Murphy and the Prince Regent. Did the Soviet Government desire a military pact with General de Gaulle? The French Communists immediately moderated their demands to an extent which placed them to the right of all the Resistance parties. Did relations between the Soviet Government and France grow cold? The French Communists then remembered that they were the revolutionary advance guard of the proletariat, and insisted that the French Government should nationalize the banks. Did Molotov demand at the London Conference that France should be excluded from the deliberations? The French Communists, who, up to that moment, had supported a policy of national prestige, immediately explained, as defenders of the poor who had just remembered their role, that the French Government would do much better to see about increasing rations at home instead of mixing itself up in the affairs of Great Powers. Did Molotov again show amiability towards M. Bidault in order to secure his vote at a diplomatic conference, the French Communists immediately demonstrated that France had nothing to hope but from Soviet friendship. Or did Molotov brusquely refuse to allow France to have the Saar coal, the French Communists declared that neither coal nor proletarians had a fatherland.

In Finland the Popular Democratic Party, which was founded by Stalinists and calls itself "Marxist-Leninist," came out against the first principle of all traditional Marxism, the nationalization of industry. By a strange chance, the Russian Control Commission had just informed the Finnish Government that "nationalization is contrary to Soviet interests."

The Soviet Union seems to have no economic interests in far-off Brazil. The Brazilian Communists denounce the Brazilian President Vargas as a tyrant and call for meetings of protest in all countries to demand the release of their leader, Prestes. But then the Soviet

Government renews diplomatic relations with Brazil in order to obtain some obscure advantages or the other. Immediately the same Communist leader, Prestes, turns round and supports the tyrant who has held him in prison for seven years, the same dictator whom the Communists have always denounced as the archetype of South-American Fascism.

The examples are by no means exhausted. There are very many more, all publicly notorious. We have certainly not recalled these things in order to minimize the brave struggle waged by numerous Communists to free Europe from the German yoke, but to place that struggle in a proper relation to the diplomatic and political aims of the Stalinist dictatorship, and to prevent public opinion from failing to observe the other side of the medal—namely, that those same virtues of courage, unselfishness and fraternity which abound amongst Communist rank and file can be harnessed from one day to the next in the service of any and every passing interest of Stalin. For example, the defeatist agitation of the Communists in 1939-40 in favour of Hitler demonstrated clearly that such interests coincide with the interests of humanity and human progress only by hazard.

The Fundamental Laws of Stalinism outside Russia

After this further evidence of the complete submission of all foreign Communist parties to Stalin, a submission sensationally underlined by the reappearance of the Comintern in the international arena in October, 1937, we can sum up the permanent features of their activity in a few lines.

The fundamental and daily task of those parties which call themselves Communist is to provide the Soviet Government with a means of pressure on all foreign governments—namely, the threat of social agitation which it holds like blackmail over their heads, putting the threat into operation or refraining according to convenience. The Communist parties carry out this demagogic badgering of their own governments alone or by mobilizing that immense network of “sympathizers” and Sovietophiles we have called the “sixth column,” which is under their control and answers to their guidance. There are well-disciplined “Communist fractions” in all trade unions and “brother” parties, and, above all, in the innumerable committees for cultural exchange, “anti-Fascist” associations and other similar bodies, and it is the discreet but definite instructions of the Communist apparatus to these trade unionists, intellectuals and sympathizers which inspire, guide and hold together the sixth column in all countries.

The Communist parties also serve to side-track the progressive tendencies of the proletariat, and to prevent, above all, the

formation of any other pole of attraction which might reveal that the Socialist prestige still enjoyed by Moscow is nothing but a usurpation. This latter consideration is decisive for the permanency of Stalinist power, and it amply explains the policy of the International in acute situations. When a revolutionary movement abroad can be dominated by Stalinists and guided into a political authoritarian mould subject absolutely to Russian interests, then and only then does Stalin come forward to support it. But if there is any danger of other working-class tendencies taking the lead, if the democratic spirit threatens to survive, then Stalin will abort that movement mercilessly. His power in the far-off Kremlin would be much less endangered by a defeated revolution elsewhere than by a successful revolution which set itself up as a rival. Soviet interests demand, above all, that no spectre of "another November" should ever arise.

There is nothing surprising about the fact that the prestige of the Russian November Revolution continues to dazzle numerous revolutionaries in other countries, for it also hypnotizes numerous anti-revolutionary elements. We are face to face here with a phenomenon which plays an important part in human history: the fixation of political passions on a traumatic shock of particular intensity. Violent transfers of private property such as took place in France in 1789 and in Russia in 1917 represent extreme traumatic shocks of this kind. For their supporters they are marvellous acts of iconoclasm; for their opponents they are eternally unforgivable sins; for both friends and enemies they are sufficiently profound never to be disavowed, never to be pardoned—not even if subsequent vicissitudes produce the most patent treason to their original idea. Both love and hate persist without reason around an event which has long since completely changed its nature, and which continues to exist in the old form only in the endless collision of that love and hate. The worker applauds because the bourgeois detests; the bourgeois detests because the worker applauds—and the common object of their passion has long ceased to merit either the honour or the malediction. It is thus that the ivy of political passion continues to luxuriate over the ruins of human achievements.

DISCUSSION WITH AN ENLIGHTENED STALINIST

"... *et prodigue surtout du sang des misérables.*" Racine.

On Passion and Objectivity

"SO EVERYTHING'S FOR THE worst in the worst of all possible worlds in the Soviet Union, everything without exception?" asks our enlightened reader who sympathizes with Stalinism. (What author does not fondly suppose that his readers are enlightened?) "Can one really reply to monolithic praise merely by monolithic blame? Not a healthy cell, not a noble intention, not a praiseworthy institution? How unlikely that is!"

"Your astonishment, dear reader, astonishes us. Like all those who sympathize with the Soviet régime, you have probably not failed to justify its rigours and excuse its imperfections by reference to the abject condition of Russian society under Czarism. You even insist on presenting Czarist Russia as a hell on earth, because, naturally, the merit attaching to the supposed salvation of the Russian people would thereby appear much greater. In short, you are not prepared to grant Czarism one healthy cell, one noble intention or one praiseworthy institution. . . . And, incidentally, I am quite in agreement with you on the point. Here we have the first example of a political régime where monolithic blame does not appear in the least unlikely to you.

"Another example where we should be in agreement was offered until comparatively recently by Nazi Germany. The example is even heightened by just those 'model institutions' which so impress you in the Soviet Union. Czarist Russia knew nothing of them, but the Nazi régime, the inheritor of a rich and highly cultured land, was able to present them much more liberally than Stalinism. However, because Hitlerism was involved, such 'model institutions' did not impress or deceive you for one moment. It made no difference to you that in Nazi Germany there were doctors, devoted to the care of the poor, who had built model hospitals; that there were courageous teachers who thought more of educating their pupils than inculcating pan-German propaganda; that some workers were sent away to splendid holiday camps; that some musicians, devoted to their art, gave of their best before popular audiences; that scientists, guided by a devotion to truth, accomplished great things in magnificent laboratories. None of these personal virtues and admirable institutions prevented your

condemning the political régime established by Hitler. And you would certainly be indignant at any attempt to exploit the benevolent activities of certain men and certain institutions—deriving spontaneously from the advance of human civilization—as extenuating circumstances for those responsible for concentration camps like Buchenwald. Is it too much to ask you to display the same clear-sightedness with regard to those responsible for such camps as Solovskí?

“And in any case, you also know—perhaps sub-consciously, but you still know it—that the Stalinist régime is monolithically evil; you know it by virtue of an infallible sign which we have already pointed out in our chapter on Soviet foreign policy: by its anxious desire for concealment.

“The hermetic isolation with which Stalinism deliberately and ruthlessly surrounds itself is sufficient proof that its activities would not stand the light of day. We are here in the presence of one of those devastating facts, instantly controllable by everyone, which, like ‘criminal legislation’ or the terror, are capable on their own of revealing the whole truth concerning all the alleged complexities of the régime. No amount of sophistry or quibbling can explain away evidence as old as the world itself: they love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. The rigid censorship established at the Soviet frontiers speaks volumes; it is enough to stigmatize the whole régime. Surely that is a deduction as objective as it is pertinent?”

“An objective deduction! Tell that to the Marines! How can you talk of objectivity when your own feelings are visible in every line you write? Your book is not an investigation at all, but an indictment.”

“Very well. I claim the right to express my feelings. If it is legitimate, and even noble, to wax indignant when one sees a cripple struck, or an innocent condemned, or a work of art mutilated; if many contend that the breaking of a sacred vase, or the profanation of a grave, may justly excite virulent condemnation, then I see no reason why feelings should be silent as soon as the conduct of governments and the fate of peoples are concerned. On the contrary, I contend that the intensity of the feeling and the ardour of the discussion should rise in accordance with the greater number of human beings whose fate is concerned. I see no reason why it should be just to denounce a sadist and yet unseemly to condemn a despot. Those who preach serenity in the judgment of political régimes, but who tremble with indignation at a foul blow in boxing, those who never feel themselves in the least way disturbed by political authoritarianism, but who take great offence at the least liberty on the part of their neighbour in the bus, suffer, I fear, either from an excess of egoism or a lack

of imagination. They are incapable of observing drama and humiliation on a collective scale with the same keenness as individual vexations and sufferings. This partial paralysis of sensibility, from which so many of our contemporaries suffer, represents one of the trump cards in the hands of the artisans of terrorism.

"It is more than a right; it is a duty to cultivate a social susceptibility, and to learn to grow indignant at the anonymous martyrdom of a whole people. I know that millions of my contemporaries, human beings like myself, are being tortured by the G.P.U., and yet I am not supposed to talk of the matter except in moderate terms—if, indeed, I am permitted to talk of it at all. They kill, and kill, and kill, and they keep on killing in camps every bit as hideous as Buchenwald, and yet I am supposed to remain calm because those camps are in the Soviet Union and not in Germany. Do you really desire that humanity should once again suffer the shame and indignity which mortified it when it discovered that for ten long years it had allowed the enemies of Nazism to be tortured whilst remaining deaf to their lamentations?

"You tell me perhaps that passion is a bad counsellor in the search for truth, and that I should particularly guard against it to be able to establish beyond all doubt the facts I put forward. And I tell you that I believe I have followed that advice to the letter. I have taken the greatest possible pains to place my documentation and my references before the eyes of my readers, but I shall never permit my social sense to be blunted in the name of objectivity. At the beginning of this book, I did my best to dissipate the confusion which so often exists between objectivity and neutrality. I contend that although it is necessary for a historian to examine the facts without consulting his heart, yet once he has established the facts it is right and proper that he should obey the dictates of his heart. To deny the possibility of one man's doing both these things is to reckon humanity at too low a rate, and to make science and learning too sombre a matter. In short, I hope to have demonstrated objectively that Stalinism is a tyranny, and I now plead passionately that tyranny is an evil thing."

"You are making things rather too easy with this peremptory reduction of a régime demonstrably collectivist to the level of a mere tyranny fit to set the world aghast. Up to the present you have contented yourself with bombarding us with embarrassing revelations concerning its works, and calling it by the name of its leader. I should prefer you to define its principles, and to risk compromising yourself by giving it a more sociological designation. And above all—for I should like to see my Marxist tastes catered for—I should like to know to what general system you suppose its economic mechanism belongs."

"In short, you demand that I should decide for one or other of

the various 'isms,' the hard and fast labels which sociological terminology has available. But that might make us judge the Soviet ingredients by the label on the bottle instead of by their taste. I propose therefore that we should begin by tracing the general tendencies of the economic infrastructure, and once we are in agreement on the matter we shall have plenty of time to argue about the name.

The Economic System

"I shall do my best to present you with a picture as succinct and faithful as possible, in so far as those two terms are compatible.

"In agriculture, in industry and in commerce none of 'the means of production and exchange' in the Soviet Union is private property. No private individual may acquire the services of another individual by means of wage or salary payment, with the exception of domestic servants and the secretaries employed by the privileged for their personal affairs.

"The factories are grouped 'vertically'—that is to say, according to their speciality—in trusts which usually have their headquarters in the capital, and 'horizontally'—that is to say, according to their location—in local or regional groups, often known as 'combines.' The tendency to concentration in giant enterprises, favoured even under Czarism by specifically Russian factors, has become a system. The few medium-sized enterprises, and those of an artisan nature, which still exist, have been grouped together in associations so powerful that they represent a sort of trust although its points of production are dispersed.

"As a result of the collectivization of agriculture in 1930—the second act of the Russian Revolution, which was, as we have seen, even bloodier than the first—agriculture was forced into the same organizational mould as industry. Peasants no longer had the right to own more than a few chickens, a cow, and a small plot of land, and these were regarded not as instruments of production, but as 'consumption goods.' The wartime tolerance which permitted peasants to sell the products of their own plots, their chickens and cows, etc., on the free market, was annulled after the war by the decree of September 19th, 1946. To-day the peasants still live in their old huts, though they are more and more being replaced by collective dwellings, and they carry out the work in the fields according to the same economic norms as workers in the factories. From the standpoint of the labour statutes, the *kolkhoze* is an open-air factory. The new proletarians of the villages receive their wages in the same way as their comrades in the towns: from the hands of the directors, and according to both time- and piece-rates. If in the case of agricultural workers much of the payment is in kind this is purely a matter of convenience.

"The directors of all enterprises, both industrial and agricultural, are exclusively appointed 'from above.'

"The development of the directorial system is one of the clearest symptoms of the degeneration of the Soviet régime. During the revolutionary period leaders were always elected by workers' soviets. The question of direction did not arise in agricultural districts, because Russia's peasants had just won the introduction of a form of small-holding property which guaranteed them the usufruct of the soil for a period of ninety-nine years. From 1925 onwards the integral representative system gave place to the 'triangle' consisting of the director of the factory appointed by the president of the trust, himself appointed by the Minister of Production; the secretary of the Communist Party factory organization; and, finally, the secretary of the labour-union factory organization. We have already seen in Chapter II that from 1929 onwards secretaries of the party and the labour unions were freed from control by the electors and turned into mere agents of the higher authorities. Less and less regard was shown to the electoral comedy, which was more and more replaced by 'nominations' pure and simple. Thanks to the patient and untiring efforts of Stalin, in the end the last vestiges of democratic aspirations were completely eliminated even from that narrow triangle. From January 31st, 1929, to November 2nd, 1931, a series of decrees (published in the *Pravda* and in the organs of the International Labour Office) abolished all trace of workers control in industry in terms both exact and insistent. To save ourselves the trouble of entering into unnecessary administrative detail concerning this disciplinary reaction, let us confine ourselves to reproducing here one or two of the official commentaries in the Soviet Press concerning the 'absolute authority of the director':

" 'Henceforth the foreman will have full powers in his workshop, the departmental chief in his department, and the director in his factory' (Kaganovitch).

" 'These dispositions definitely establish the principle of personal direction, and break with the collegial methods instituted with the November Revolution' (*Torgovo Promyshlennaya Gazieta*, February 2nd, 1929).

" 'He alone [the director] will have the right to give orders . . . and all must obey them strictly, whatever situation they may occupy in the party or the unions. . . . In particular, the director has the exclusive right to engage and dismiss personnel. . . . The unions must not interfere in any way in the work of the direction. . . .' (Instructions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, September 7th, 1929).

"This legislation was reinforced in an authoritarian sense by decrees promulgated on April 1st, 1936, June 26th, 1940, and

July 24th, 1940, which extended the power of the directors to include the fixing of wage-rates, time-rates and working norms, and the decision of matters relating to the management of the co-operatives and to the housing of the workers.

"By a decree of June 15th, 1933, all power in the countryside was placed in the hands of the *politotdels*, or political sections emanating from the Central Committee of the Communist Party, both over the local Communist authorities and over the popular representative authorities, which, in fact, the *politotdels* now simply replaced. They received the right to appoint or dismiss the presidents and other officials of the *kolkhozes*, all of whom are, in principle, elected by the annual general meeting of the *kolkhozes*, thereby revealing once again the derisory character of such elections.

"In short, the directors enjoy full discretionary authority over their workers, though rigidly subject to the higher authorities. Prices are fixed by the Ministries in Moscow after consultation with the directors of the trusts or the regional presidents of the *kolkhozes*. In other words, they are fixed by a higher authority, and subject to no influence on the part of the consumers.

"We have already made a sufficiently close acquaintance with this higher authority to dispense with any further demonstration that it is, more crudely than in any other country, a dictatorial instrument serving the interests of a bureaucratic oligarchy, and not in any way a delegation of popular authority.

"Membership of the dominant class is essentially connected with the privilege of higher education, which is reserved to the children of the bureaucrats and in this way constitutes the Soviet form of inheritance. Supplementary access to this class is open to parvenus by co-option from the ranks of brilliant and servile subordinates. On the other hand, it is possible to be hurled from membership of this privileged class by falling into political disgrace. These factors are indisputably sufficient to define the existence of a social class, a class certainly more fluid than the former aristocracy, but not more so than the capitalist bourgeoisie, whose conditions of class exit and entry are sufficiently analogous: privileged classes remain stable thanks to the inheritance of fortunes and thanks to 'situations' open to those who have enjoyed a higher education—that is to say, once again a matter of fortune—and they also offer possibilities of entry into their ranks by the elevation of the most competent, resourceful or lucky members of lower classes, and possibilities of expulsion from their ranks—the reverse of fortune.

A Recollection of Certain Marxist Principles

"For the better understanding of the mechanism of that super-trust which embraces the totality of Soviet activities, permit me to recall one or two principles of political economy borrowed from the

basic and still vital fund of Marxism. I do not regard this vital fund as an infallible dogma; in fact, I will confess that in my opinion it requires overhauling in certain important particulars, but I willingly accept your invitation to take them as a basis of judgment on the Soviet Union, all the more so because if we succeed in establishing the economic and social indignity of the Soviet system in relation to classic Marxism we shall have established it *a fortiori* in relation to all other and more subtle doctrines regarding the salvation of mankind.

"The human race is not distinguished merely by its ability 'to create riches,' which result from the conscious transformations brought about by labour operating on the primary resources of nature. Further, this labour capacity of mankind possesses a still more subtle property, glimpsed by Ricardo and adopted by Marx as the centre of his system—namely, the power to create greater wealth than the producers of that wealth need for their own subsistence.

"The minimum mass of products required for the existence of a group of men and for the reproduction of their kind, including food, clothing, housing, social services, education, and leisure, obviously depends on the particular level of civilization attained; and on what the society in question conveniently regards as a 'minimum,' but it can be defined by and large for each particular epoch. We propose to call it the 'social minimum.'

"Now, by working for a certain time and at a certain rate, also governed by the particular level of civilization, a group of men are capable of producing a mass of riches greater than that which they need in order to live, i.e. greater than this social minimum. This surplus is what both Ricardo and Marx call 'surplus-product,' which is expressed in value by the famous phrase, 'surplus-value.' As is quite evident, despite a widespread belief to the contrary, this term does not indicate any specially infamous chicanery on the part of capitalism, but an intrinsic and natural property of human labour and human society. It is, incidentally, a particularly fortunate property because it alone permits the progressive enrichment of human society and, in consequence, the possibility of human progress.

"The relation between the surplus-product and the mass of products corresponding to the social minimum, or the index of surplus productivity of human labour, grows constantly with the progress of science and technology. In his day Marx estimated it at 1:1—in other words, the workers could produce twice as much as they needed to consume in order to live and maintain their families, or, to put it in a different fashion, out of a working day of eight hours, four were devoted to the production of the social minimum, or 'wages,' and four to the production of surplus-value.

"Where capitalism is blamed by Marxism is in the destination it gives to this surplus-value. The people who possess capital in the form of money, or instruments of production and exchange, and who, thanks to the possession of this capital, can make the 'proletarians'—that is to say, men who possess nothing but their labour power—work for them, are called 'capitalists.' The latter reward the former for their labour by paying them the social minimum, a proportion depending more or less on the fortunes of the economic and political struggle, and for themselves they retain the surplus-value. This appropriation of surplus-value by the private owners of the means of production and exchange is the essential phenomenon which distinguishes the capitalist régime. It is when this surplus-value, the natural result of the virtues of human labour power, is thus appropriated by the few that it is called 'profit,' and the process of this appropriation is called in the terminology of scientific Socialism 'the exploitation of man by man.'

"Socialism, inspired by the ideal of justice, which is opposed to the exploitation of man by man, favours an economic system which tends to restore to the social group as a whole all the surplus-value it is capable of creating. And in Socialist eyes exploitation exists wherever that surplus-value is not so redistributed, no matter by whom it may be appropriated: the bourgeoisie, joint-stock companies, parties or the State.

"The surplus-value which the capitalists appropriate is employed to two ends. One part is destined for the personal consumption of the capitalist class, and even if this part is no greater than the collective social minimum destined for the maintenance of the workers, it nevertheless provides much greater abundance because it is shared by far fewer people. The other part is reinvested by the capitalists in new means of production, the future source of further surplus-value destined for the sole benefit of the owners. This reinvestment, which results in the continuous growth of the means of production and, in consequence, of riches in general, corresponds to what Marx calls 'the accumulated fraction,' and the process of growth is called 'the process of accumulation.'

"When capitalism first developed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, basic capital equipment could be obtained from previous profits only to a very minor degree, and it was therefore obtained by increasing the margin of surplus-value as much as possible; that is to say, by reducing the social minimum imposed on the workers to a level very near, and sometimes even below, the 'vital minimum.' This process of 'surplus exploitation' was described by Marx as 'the process of primitive accumulation.'

"Peasant proprietorship, in which each small proprietor worked his own means of production and did not exploit the labour power of others except to a minor degree in the case of a few farm hands,

the commercial middle-class, the economic relations between the industrial and agricultural sectors, and between the metropolitan countries and the colonies, etc., naturally complicate the preceding scheme of things, but I take it that you will be sufficiently in agreement with me not to labour that point. What matters here is that Socialism supposes that the abolition of capitalism will lead to more than the mere benefit which would accrue to each worker by the return of surplus-value to society as a whole—namely, to indirect advantages of a much greater scope. From the scheme of things which we have described, we observe that the driving force of the capitalist system is the so-called ‘profit motive’ which inspires the private possessors of the means of production and exchange. Now, if we trace the consequences of this fact through all the details of the practical life of societies, we shall see that it engenders competition, a fight for markets, national barriers, monopolies, economic autarchy—in short, and above all, to a chronic tendency to relative over-production. In consequence, society is inevitably burdened with enormous unproductive costs: publicity, advertisement, Customs tariffs, protection, fraud, corruption, crises, unemployment, the destruction of stocks, police forces, armies and armaments, the conquest of markets, imperialist wars, and, finally, universal wars which limit or destroy wealth and end by hampering the productive forces of society.

“By substituting the criterion of *public weal* for *private profit*, Socialism proposes both to abolish ‘the exploitation of man by man’ and to put an end to the enormous wastage which this exploitation indirectly brings with it. Both these steps would bring about a considerable augmentation of the wealth available to human society, and thus permit the greater well-being and liberty of the individuals who constitute it.

An Attempt at a Definition

“So far so good. But as our task here is not to delve into the details of the functioning of capitalist society, let us train our Marxist economic guns on to the Stalinist ‘super-trust.’

“First of all, let us come to an agreement on what is to be known as ‘property.’ Heeding only the counsels of Marx and Lenin, which Stalin still insists that he, too, heeds, let us in our definition ‘prefer the wheat of things to the chaff of words.’ That is to say, when we are trying to discover who enjoys the benefit of a property, let us not pay too much attention to legal titles which can be made out on paper—even if the paper in question is dignified with the name of ‘Constitution’—but let us discover who holds the power to dispose factually of the thing possessed.

“As soon as the question is formulated in this realistic fashion we are obliged to recognize that in the Soviet Union the proletariat,

whether worker or peasant, enjoys no property whatever in any of the means of production, and that such property is the monopolistic possession of the bureaucracy.

"The fact that bureaucratic property in the Soviet Union takes on a collective and not a private form, as it does in a bourgeois régime, has given rise to two kinds of confusion which we must now dissipate. As soon as they hear talk of the collectivization of the means of production, and without bothering to inquire into whose hands this collectivization plays, some people proclaim that property has ceased to exist altogether, whilst others assume that *ipso facto* Socialist property prevails.

"To those who declare that even the idea of collective property is a contradiction in terms, we can present the statutes of the Marxist parties themselves. Do they not, in fact, recommend 'the collectivization of property'? And does not the Constitution of the Soviet Union make a show of 'collective property'? Certainly, a collective usufruct of surplus-value diminishes the power of each member of the usufructuary collective to dispose at his discretion of the thing possessed. But does not bourgeois society also limit more and more the power of the property-owner to do what he likes with his own property? In capitalist countries there are laws which restrain the free disposal of private property, limit its benefits and change its succession, and, quite apart from legal limitations, the division of capital in shares spreads the discretionary authority of the former sole owner; in short, the factory and the capitalist trust are being more and more subjected to collective influences and less and less subject to the good pleasure of the sole owner. Nevertheless, no amount of quibbling prevents the use of the word 'property' to describe the legal relation between modern capitalists and their enterprises. To sum up: until the vocabulary has been enriched with some new word, we propose to treat the totality of a collectivity, in this case *Russian bureaucracy*, as a proprietor.

"Others, still more numerous, identify the notion of 'collective property' with the idea of 'Socialist property.' A simple glance around the world ought to be sufficient to dissipate that misunderstanding. One can readily see properties which are both collective and capitalist—such as joint-stock companies, limited liability companies, enterprises under State management, such as railways, tobacco trusts, postal services and so on, and, one might almost add, the armed forces, in so far as they are used to conquer wealth for the sole benefit of the State, as was the case in Nazi Germany.

"State property cannot be considered as Socialist property unless the State itself is Socialist. And this condition involves two further conditions by implication. The first is that the section of surplus-value destined for consumption should be divided without too

much inequality amongst all the members of society, and the second is that all the members of the collective should be able to deliberate in a sovereign fashion on the administration of the said property, and that they in particular should decide what fractions of the product should be dedicated respectively to 'consumption goods'—that is to say, to present well-being—and to 'production goods,' or 'capital goods': that is to say, to future well-being.

"We must insist on these essential qualifications because the Soviet régime has brought about a purely 'economistic' denaturalization of Socialism of far-reaching significance. For many people, Socialism means exclusively the nationalization of production. In reality, even if we confine ourselves to the domain of strictly economic definitions, Socialism signifies the appropriation of production by society and not by the State. And once this precise definition is accepted then the following conclusions devolve from it with the force of veritable syllogisms: if the people, i.e. society, are to possess, they must administer; if they are to administer, they must be in a position to deliberate; if they are to deliberate, they must be free; free to inform themselves, free to discuss, free to appoint, and free to dismiss—in other words, altogether free. Thus *the idea of Socialist property has no sense at all unless it presupposes that the property-owning society enjoys full political democracy.* It is just as absurd to speak of socialist property when the State is dictatorial as it would be to call a régime 'capitalist' in which legal titles to the ownership of the factories were in the hands of 'private owners,' whilst, in fact, all these 'owners' were kept in prison.

"We see thus that Socialism and economic equality, like Socialism and political democracy, are in essence inseparable. If political equality without economic equality is a delusion, as the Socialist critics of bourgeois democracy contend, then, by the same token, economic sovereignty without political democracy is equally a delusion. The differences in income, ranging from one to one hundred, in the Soviet Union, and the existence of the dictatorship, suffice to demonstrate that Soviet State property is not, and cannot be, Socialist, that it cannot even tend towards Socialism.

"In the Soviet 'super-trust' the totality of the means of production and exchange, and the totality of the wealth produced, forms an immense mass, and it is the bureaucracy which determines, exclusively in its own interests, what proportion shall be accumulated and what consumed. In the first case, the bureaucracy decides absolutely the nature and use of the capital equipment, and in the second case it determines equally absolutely what its own privileged share shall be. In other words, it appropriates the surplus-value instead of returning it to society. Thus the principles of scientific Socialism invite us to regard it as an exploiting class. Its exploitation is carried out by means which we have already described:

wages and salaries, prices and taxation. The production of the trusts provides the high salaries of technical directors, whilst State revenue from taxation provides the high salaries of political leaders. Ignoring the differences which can bring them into opposition, differences which have their parallel in the rivalries of different capitalist groups, these two strata form one united bureaucratic class, absolute master of the masses of the workers and a jealous defender of its privileges. Like all dominant classes it confides its power to the State, which perpetuates and defends it.

"And now that we know more or less how this régime works let us see what label best suits it.

"Socialism? Surely not, because democratic control of everything by all, and the equitable re-distribution of surplus-value are non-existent.

"State Socialism, perhaps? No, not that either, because although the word 'State' suggests the abandonment of democracy, nevertheless the word 'Socialism' presupposes it unconditionally, and still further implies that the exploitation of man by man has ceased.

"Now, since both dictatorship and exploitation exist in the Soviet Union, since the latter is exercised through the same traditional apparatus of capital (factories in the towns and in the fields), and since further the collective appropriation of surplus-value is not incompatible with capitalism, perhaps the most logical thing to do would be to retain the label 'capitalist' for the Soviet régime without more ado?

"This seems to us to approach near the solution of the problem without, however, being entirely satisfactory, because well-established usage associates the word 'capitalism' with a *private* form of property in the means of production, and with a liberal formula of government. These fuller particulars indicate the solution. Seeing that the Stalinist régime borrows the persistence of exploitation from capitalism, and the collective form of property, as well as the absence of democracy, from the State idea, why not call it *State capitalism*?

"That is the solution which I propose for your little problem of vocabulary, but at the same time I must insist again that it is less important to give the régime a name than to agree on its nature. Now the study of the latter is by no means exhausted with the results which we have assembled so far, for they relate only to the principles of a supposedly stable system. However, a society never offers a perfect state of equilibrium, and certainly a society as young as Soviet society does not. And apart from the characteristics which economists call 'essential' we must know those which are contingent for history and decisive for life—that is to say, legislative and social particularities, usages and customs; in short, all those factors which give a group of human beings their specific colouring.

"And certainly the Stalinist régime of 1948 is not sufficiently coloured by the factors which have led us to describe it as State capitalism. Its ruling class, issue of the November Revolution, has hardly begun to stabilize itself in the second generation, and the material basis of its power, the industrialization of the country and the development of its cadres, is still in the formative stage. It is still laying the basis on which it hopes to establish its lasting domination, and we have seen that, in the absence of a substantial technical and economic heritage, it must do so in the throes of administrative muddle and with a derisory level of efficiency by an extra-exploitation of the working masses; in short, with methods which, in all justice, one cannot impute to the permanent principles of State capitalism.

"And, finally, history has ironically determined that the latest arrival in the ranks of inequalitarian régimes should have been born of a Revolution with an ultra-modern Socialist programme in the most backward country in Europe. For the new masters of Russia the memory of their Marxist origin constitutes a dangerous invitation to do too well whilst the spectacle of their wretched entourage constitutes a perfidious solicitation to do too badly. Perhaps one can sum up the Bolshevik episode by saying that the bourgeoisie of Czarist Russia was not mature enough to take its part in the November Revolution whilst the proletariat of Soviet Russia was too ignorant to safeguard its victory. A new social force inevitably appeared to exploit that double impotence to its own ends. The simple issue was that a man, cruel and tenacious, capable of limiting his designs to the exploitation of given circumstances, without sentiment for the ideals of the past and without weakness in present difficulties, compelled both the cadres and the people to submit to his implacable dictatorship.

"This dictatorship, whose burden the new leading class undertook in order to impose its rule on the country, condemned it at the same time to remain itself enslaved and condemned its profit to remain small for a long time. It forbade this new leading class the tranquil and satisfied position which would have been its lot if its 'super-trust' had been strongly constructed and recognized. Too fortunate, thanks to the pitiless vigilance of its leader, to be despatched either by aristocracy or proletariat, the Soviet bureaucracy accommodated itself to a reduced margin of power and profit. Its only hope of one day becoming rich and dominant was to remain for the time being crouched humbly at the feet of the despot, obeying his will.

"Perhaps here lies the answer to the question I raised in my chapter on the bureaucracy as to the extraordinary servility of a class which holds all the political and economic levers of the State in its hands.

"This long Cæsarian birth of a régime more dictatorial than its parent Bolsheviks desired, and more greedy than the organism of its *mujik* mother could tolerate, and the mutation of species which has accompanied it, have taken place before our eyes. Whilst waiting to see whether the child will become a man, we must amplify our definition of the new species by indicating its present stage of development. I propose to say that the Stalinist régime constitutes the dictatorial phase of primitive accumulation in Russian State capitalism.

Living Socialism or Mechanical Stateism

"But you are taking a purely idealistic definition of Socialism. Collectivization, industrialization, planning—you treat them all contemptuously with a most unscientific offhandedness."

"No; I don't treat them with contempt at all. I merely deny that in themselves they prove the existence of Socialism in the Soviet Union. Admittedly they represent necessary conditions, but in themselves they are not enough. To make myself better understood, let me give you the following example: to be civilized, a man must beyond all question be able to read and write, but a man may nevertheless be able to read and write and still remain a barbarian—for instance, Nero, Torquemada, Hitler, and all the leading lights at reading and writing in Fascist colleges. Thus although Socialism cannot exist without collectivization, industrialization and planning, there can be collectivization, industrialization and planning without Socialism.

"But you who dabble in Marxism must know that the economic infrastructure suffices to determine the political superstructure and thus to define the régime."

"Very good. But what do you say to several superstructures all compatible with the same infrastructure? In so far as Socialism has never had to define itself except in relation to its only enemy, the bourgeoisie, it has been content to concentrate its fire against private property in the means of production. And it has done it so thoroughly that now its propaganda provokes a sort of conditional reflex amongst the general public—at the mere news that private property has been abolished most men see the mirage of Socialism triumphant, though in fact such an abolition might just as well lead to a new régime of exploitation. This new factor will henceforth oblige scientific Socialism to revise its doctrine and its policy. Like many of your contemporaries, you have declared it axiomatic that society in our day can be only either capitalist or Socialist. And when another form appears you deny either that it has appeared or that it is another form. I much fear you sadly underestimate the inventive resources of which history has already given us such

proof. But a fig for generalities; let us take your three proofs one after the other. First of all, collectivization. . . .”

“I am referring here above all to the agricultural collectivization carried out by Stalin in 1929 to supplement the collectivization of industry carried out by Lenin in 1917.”

“The allusion is dangerous for you, because whilst the collectivization carried out by Lenin spelt exile for 100,000 big owners, that of Stalin cost the lives of 5 million peasants. However, as constant association with the infrastructure must have made you drunk with the pitiless determinism of history, you will probably not feel inclined to admit that Stalin can be deprived of his Socialist label for a bagatelle like that. Let us therefore consider the other facts.

“Without in the least ceasing to be Czarist, Czarist economy favoured a collective system or organization in the countryside which went back to the dawn of history, the so-called *mir*. That was a rural community quite similar to a *kolkhoze*. The members of the *mir* elected their *starost*, or head man, just as the members of a *kolkhoze* elect their ‘President.’ But in both cases the peasants soon saw their electoral prerogatives flouted by the all-powerful representatives of the central power: the police commissars under the Czar, and the *politotdels* and the agents of the G.P.U. under Stalin. Incidentally, this goes far to explain the final resignation of the peasants to Soviet collectivism. It was only for a decade that most of them knew the meaning of private property in land: from 1920, the end of the period of war Communism, to 1929, the beginning of the Five-Year Plan.

“Primitive societies provide us with a further example. Their agricultural system was collective; nevertheless, no Marxist school has ever proposed to regard such communities as Socialist. Before there can be Socialism there must be economic equality and political democracy accompanied by culture and leisure; the individuals in society must dispose of sufficient powers to satisfy their desires; there must be——”

“An industrialization of the world. That is precisely what Stalin has done in his sixth of the globe.”

“Yes, industrialize, but not for the sake of industrialization. Japan is also industrialized, and I would point out to you that there were periods in its recent history when its industrial progress was more rapid than that of Soviet Russia. Similarly, capitalist magnates have super-industrialized the United States, whilst the Nazis did the same in Germany. It would seem that the age-old dream of the oppressed is no longer to be expressed in such words as ‘well-being’ and ‘liberty,’ but in words like ‘Magnitogorsk’ and ‘Dnieprostroi.’ How should we doubt any longer that Socialism has sprung fully armed from the earth like Minerva, since instead

of corn the steppes now sprout giant smoke stacks, blast furnaces and turbines? But Holland has reclaimed the Zuider Zee; Mussolini drained the Pontine Marshes; Roosevelt inaugurated the T.V.A.; Hitler built motor roads; France erected the Truyère Dam and built factories in the heart of the mountains; and I know not what Scotsman built the Forth Bridge—but no one has as yet proposed to regard such monuments as temples of Socialism. They are built as everyday matters without many flourishes of trumpets—except under the dictators.

“Granted, Socialism has allied its fate with the expansion of industrial technique, and it was right to do so, though perhaps it has shown rather too much enthusiasm for the formulas of extreme concentration which have developed in the most advanced capitalist countries, though they are not necessarily the most rational methods. However, machinery, even the most gigantic and awe-inspiring, is nothing but a means to an end for Socialism: the improvement of the life of the individual together with an increase in labour productivity in order that the surplus-value returned to the workers should increase their share as much as possible beyond the social minimum. Socialism is inseparable from that redistribution, and an industrialization which serves only to increase surplus-value to the benefit of a new exploiting class is not Socialism.”

“How strict your demands are! The rigorous definitions you wish to attach to each word threaten to prevent your using them at all, for human history never moulds itself on the dreams of men. You deny the Socialist standard—which you will certainly never risk tarnishing if you never raise it—to every form of industrialization which does not aim at maximum well-being for all. I am prepared to content myself if it assures a minimum of ‘ill-being’—I mean, if it eliminates the enormous losses caused by capitalist anarchy; in short if it is planned.

“Let us not discuss the excessive demands I put forward in the matter of language, for, after all, when you so passionately repudiate the term ‘State capitalism’ which I put forward to describe the Soviet system, and insist on the term ‘Socialism,’ you show no less an attachment to the rigours of vocabulary. But as far as planning is concerned, I must repeat what I have already said: to be worthy of Socialism it must tend to increase productivity, which in its turn must be devoted to increasing well-being, and that increased well-being must benefit society as a whole. However, there can be planning which conforms to some of these conditions only, or, indeed, none at all. There can be planning which does not result in an increase of productivity, as was the case with a number of experiments carried out in mediæval China, and as is the case in Soviet Russia, where bureaucratic burdens annul the advantages of allegedly scientific foresight. Similarly, there can be planning

which increases productivity, but which does not increase well-being, as is the case with war economy and Fascist economy, which are co-ordinated only to serve bellicose and destructive ends. And, finally, there can be planning which does result in an increase both of productivity and well-being, but where such increased well-being benefits only a minority of society, such as was the case with the Jesuits in Paraguay, who, in order to enrich themselves, imposed on the natives the most rational methods of production known in that epoch. It is to such a system that post-war capitalism can tend, though on the level of modern technique. It is a tendency praiseworthy in itself because it eliminates economic anarchy, waste and fratricidal struggles, but it still merits Socialist criticism because the total advantages of planning do not accrue to the benefit of society as a whole. The so-called 'Taylor system,' which represents a sort of planning on an individual business level, is an example of this kind. Conceived to increase production for the sole benefit of the employers, the organization of labour by the Taylor system has always been vigorously rejected by the workers, although it contains valuable lessons for Socialism."

"Are you so certain that the advantages of planning in Russia do not benefit society as a whole?"

"The fact that the surplus-product is not, in fact, distributed fairly amongst all the workers is clearly demonstrated by the extraordinary wage inequalities which admittedly exist in Soviet Russia; and the fact that this distribution does not at all meet with the approval of the workers concerned is demonstrated equally clearly by the existence of the dictatorship. The most certain guarantee of the disappearance of that exploitation of man by man is once again the existence of democracy. Where was there ever an example of a people knowingly suffering privation whilst, with its full and complete agreement, a minority had its fill? By that simple consideration of common sense, we arrive at an essential condition: if planning is to contain any elements of Socialism, it must be combined above all with political democracy. The distribution of labour between the various sections of society, the rhythm of production, the geographic location of industry, the destination of the product, the appointment of leaders, the fixing of wages, salaries and prices, and all such matters must be freely discussable by all citizens, and be decided according to the desires of the majority."

"A fine muddle that would lead to! Where should the masses get the technical qualifications to discuss such matters? And if they did so by means of delegates most jealously watched, those delegates would never succeed in reconciling the conflicting interests of their mandatories. I confess that a little authoritarianism appears desirable to me in the matter of economic planning, and I can see

clearly that a government enjoying incidentally the confidence of the people would proceed to exercise it without more ado."

"If you condescend to approve of the suggestion that your government enjoys the confidence of the people, I do not see why it should be 'incidentally.' But allow me here to open up a digression. A modern Marxist conception, which Marx himself would doubtlessly have repudiated, makes Socialism into a religion of machines, anti-sentimental and pitiless. Blind history is its demiurge; industry is its altar, the inflexible party is its clergy; and the thoughtful and the sceptical are its expiatory victims. The dependence of 'politics' on 'economics' which Marx discovered at the heart of social life, and which must be abolished, is here elevated into a panacea. However, let us go back to the flood.

"Men have grouped themselves together in societies in order better to ward off the dangers which threaten them, and better to exploit the resources of Nature. But so long as the means for exploiting these natural resources, that is to say, technology, remained primitive, society could develop only along lines of inequality, and to the accompaniment of struggles and suffering for the many. It became like a second nature for the masses; it fed them as a mother, but it treated them as a stepmother. The problem finally arose of organizing society in such a fashion that it would dispense greater advantages for fewer sacrifices. Socialism does not pretend to be anything but a recipe—based on the rational employment of modern science—for solving this problem and escaping from the dilemma of a society at once motherly and step-motherly. It may appear philologically paradoxical, but it would be sociologically exact to say that the whole programme of Socialism consists in deflating the role of society, removing this avid and jealous divinity from its pedestal, and turning it into a docile instrument of the power of the individual. Recall Marx's admirable definition of the Socialist revolution as 'the passing of the era of necessity'—meaning the era in which the fate of man is determined by blind economic laws—'and the opening of the era of liberty'—meaning the era in which men will fashion their own economic conditions and, in consequence, their own fate according to their own desires."

"Not so fast. Marx was defining the spirit of the socialist revolution and not its immediate tasks. As far as concrete aims are concerned, he regarded that passage from the era of necessity to the era of liberty as the crowning achievement of a long period of Socialist education—as a 'final aim.' Are you going to push your impatience so far as to deny the necessity of time for Socialist enterprises? Can you not see that they have inherited a society dulled and weakened by age-old slavery, burdened with the costs of a revolution which, all in all, was imposed on them, and hated

by the majority of those who were the vessels of society's culture? In such circumstances, surely the first Socialist attempts have merited well of humanity if they have uprooted the last vestiges of capitalism and laid the basis on which future centuries can build? No one has ever pretended that we are at the final stage in the Soviet Union."

"You are wrong. Your leader, Joseph Stalin, has done it on numerous occasions and with great solemnity, as we have already shown by several quotations. The avidity of dictators for success at all costs, and their morbid need for infallibility, prevent their being satisfied with gradual progress and cause them to present all their achievements—real or pretended—as definitive, perfect and sublime. I should therefore be perfectly justified in criticizing the Stalinist régime in relation to ultimate Socialism, but as I have the pleasure, well merited, I hope, after all these pages, of no longer discussing with Stalin himself, but with one of his honest sympathizers, I will not use the right which honest dialectics confer upon me. Particularly as I am perfectly prepared to agree to all the delays you like, and to expect on the morrow of the revolution no more than the first faint hardly-recognizable vestiges of Socialism. However, for my part I believe that these first vestiges to which we are both prepared to confine our hopes and our desires, should be democracy and greater ease, and not giant combines and inflexible plans. The former guarantee the arrival of the latter, but not the other way round. Monster enterprises can be built without the masses of the people profiting by them at all, but, inversely, a free people would undoubtedly create in their own time, at their own pace, and to their own benefit, whatever factories and enterprises they need. In the first case planned industry can well serve egoistic ends, whilst in the second case it would develop at the instance of, and in accordance with, the collective interests of society.

"For the rest, consult your own feelings in the matter. If you are anything of a Marxist, what do you expect of a revolution before you are prepared to recognize that its core is Socialist? Do you expect it to lay down the rate of production of nails for the next ten years, or do you expect it to set about giving bread at once to those who need it? Do you expect it to link the seas by canals, or to place the printing presses at the disposal of the oppressed? A moment or two ago you denied the right of the masses to economic control on the ground that they lacked culture, but should it not be the first care of Socialism to give them precisely this culture they lack? Is not the essential function of the period of transition to initiate the masses into the science of governing? The revolution can have no value at all if it confines itself to overthrowing the masters without at the same time developing the men. Its mission can be fulfilled only in the throes of political life, which

alone can make the breach with the past definitive because it alone can raise the former oppressed to the rank of sovereign citizens. This profound role of the revolutionary period as a school for democracy is, alas! too often forgotten in the shadow of its more spectacular role of destructive hurricane. And because culture is not possible in misery and want, this same task of raising the cultural level of the people demands that the new power should at once dig up the roots of economic inequality. To sum up, the fundamental reforms which we must demand of a Socialist revolution are first of all democracy and the raising of the standard of life, and only later collectivization and planning. Democracy and well-being are the indispensable hammer and sickle of Socialist industry and agriculture."

"When brought up against the obstacles I mention, you have nothing to offer but the liberal philosophy of cloud-cuckoo-land. Realism forbids me to follow you, but it does suggest the following simple question: granted the unpreparedness of the majority of Russians for democracy, how could full democracy be introduced without reducing the régime to impotence?

"Realism is the main excuse of all usurpations; they pretend to be the upshot of Fate, whereas in reality they are merely the appetite of usurpers. No usurpation has ever demonstrated that reality demands the abandonment of principles, but merely that the abandonment of principles suits its own reality. The idea that a régime can be strong only if it shapes its institutions along military lines is—forgive my frankness—part and parcel of the doctrine of Fascism. It was again refuted by the example of the late war, in which the countries blessed with parliaments and inspired by free discussion, vanquished the countries which were subordinate to the authority of a leader. It was also refuted by the example of the revolutionary years in Russia, during which perils, resistance and relative liberty existed side by side. The gravest problems of those years, the formation of the new International, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and the New Economic Policy, were passionately discussed during the life of Lenin, whose views were openly opposed without that opposition costing his opponents a hair of their heads, and without compromising the struggle against the Whites. Surely, precisely this capacity to act whilst criticizing—the highest form of which is perhaps the use of effective force whenever it becomes absolutely unavoidable, whilst at the same time never ceasing to regret and despise the use of force—this obstinate persistence of doubt which alone can prevent action degenerating into stupidity, are the distinctive mark, the aureole, so to speak, of the civilized man?

"I see you have become thoughtful. I fear that by dint of displaying its own fierce trappings as pure Socialism Stalinism has

accustomed our contemporaries to regard democracy as a sign of weakness, as a compromise with capitalism. To have provoked this complete reversal of values is perhaps the capital crime of Stalinism. However, try and shake off the evil spell and tell me what harm would come of it if a country supposedly collectivized permitted the existence of various parties, tolerated debates in parliament, and allowed polemics to appear in its newspapers? Don't you think that within the framework established by the revolution there is room for a variety of doctrines, for both internationalism and the theory of Socialism in one country alone, for both syndicalism and co-operativism, for both planning and anti-planning? Don't you think that the citizens of such a country would be quite capable of discussing problems even as complex as the statute of rural collectivization, the rhythm of industry, the nature of public education, the policy to be adopted towards religion, the question of wages and salaries, administration, and the ideology to be propagated?"

"On the contrary, I believe that the citizens would find so much to discuss in the problems of Socialist education that they would have found no time to introduce it. Without knowing it you capitalize the dictatorial labours of Stalin which you abuse so much, for without him what would have happened to the electoral freedom of the peasants? Without his strong hand collectivization would never have been achieved."

"What you say there seems to me a very serious matter. If it is true that the peasants, once at liberty, would hurry to restore private property, then I can only conclude that it was a bad thing to deprive them of it in the first place. As far as I am concerned I should have confidence only in a process of voluntary co-operation inspired by the tried and trusted experience of co-operative models, a process, which incidentally would find no Socialist reason whatever to go straight away to extremes. I know that all revolutionaries are 'accelerators' of history, of course, but nevertheless it is far from wise to pull the levers too violently—they might spring back and hit you in the face.

"There is one thing further: democracy is not only the unique safeguard and guarantee of the Socialist character of collective property, it is also indispensable to the harmonious functioning of a planned economy. Let us assume that in fact the spur of private competition, the incentive of profit and the fear of possible ruin, have disappeared; what is to replace them if not popular control? *In socialized production political democracy has an economic role of the highest importance to play: it is a motor and a regulator.* Without it there can be no reliable relation with the tastes and requirements of the public; no serious check on the progress of the plan; and no fruitful correction of errors. Thus the absence of democracy was

very prejudicial to Soviet industrialization. It made for the growth of incompetence and the multiplication of incompetents; a fall in the rate of production hardly balanced by overtime; an increase in the costs of production; and the falsification of returns. It depleted the market and lowered the quality of the goods produced. It led to the despair of the consumer and the exhaustion of the worker.

"You said that you demanded less of Socialism that it should create economic equality than that it should eliminate the wastage inherent in the capitalist system, but, in fact, that wastage will continue to flourish in planned production unless it is democratically planned. In this book, which is primarily political and social, I have had no occasion to underline the economic evils of the Stalinist régime and the muddle it has caused. Perhaps you will be surprised to learn that there is a Black Market in Russia, together with speculators and a secret exchange; that unemployment has by no means disappeared and continues to exist in another form—the phenomenon I had occasion to refer to *en passant*, of the birds of passage, who represent an endless and dolorous army; that there are mines which still contain great natural resources, but which have become unexploitable because the reckless gutting of certain layers to satisfy heaven knows what vanities has irreparably blocked all access to the remaining layers; that in a country where means of communication are unimaginably primitive the famous Magnitogorsk Combine set up in the Urals obtains its coal from the Kusnetz Basin situated in Siberia almost 2,000 miles away; that a survey whose results were hastily inflated to the greater glory of the plan resulted in the construction of a factory at Tchimkent capable of working 60,000 tons of lead and zinc a month, and that this new industrial giant was completed before it was discovered that in fact the local resources could supply only a twentieth part of that figure, with the result that the factory was abandoned and has since fallen into ruins; that the people of Moscow are desperately short of footwear whilst the manufacturing centres pile up tens of thousands of pairs for lack of packing material to despatch them; that one textile trust received so many orders and counter-orders from the gods of the plan that within the space of a single year it had to change its whole production programme forty times; that half the gases of the blast furnaces in several metallurgical basins were wasted for years because the planners had omitted to design reservoirs to accommodate them; that whole forests have been felled before railways were built to remove the trunks, and that in consequence the timber is lying there slowly rotting for lack of transportation; that the shortage of spare parts in industry is a permanent cancer which brings innumerable costly machines to a standstill, and with them important sectors of production; that gigantic automobile factories have been built

without first building the roads on which their products could be used; that the shocking state of transport upsets all forecasts, whilst errors in shunting, loading and reloading disorganize all plans; that the delays in transport result in the wholesale destruction of perishable and seasonal goods; that innumerable buildings are already dilapidated only two or three years after they have been built; that more time is spent repairing than building; that, admittedly, many trusts secure only 50 per cent. of their primary materials through the plan, and the rest is obtained 'outside the plan'; that factory directors engage many skilled workers through the medium of clandestine agencies, which receive up to 50 roubles a head for such services; that the great plan itself, so laboriously and minutely calculated for five years, rapidly develops into a sort of confused Olympic Games and its bureaucrats into record-breaking athletes, certain of whom pretend to do their five-year quota in three years, whilst others have not done theirs in seven or eight; that the heroes of labour whose glory ought to reside in the strict execution of the tasks imposed upon them boast instead of positively fabulous performances, demonstrating thereby an ignorant contempt for reason, whose champions they are supposed to be; that muddle in one branch of the economic system causes muddle in all; that the haunting spectre of the plan, which weighs heavily on everything and everyone, leads to haste and superficiality, thus ruining labours that might otherwise have been fruitful; in short, that harmonious and rational production exists in the Soviet Union only as one lie the more in the wealth of Soviet propaganda.

"A decree dated June 25th, 1946, issued by the Central Control Commission, reveals that directors in the coal-mining, aviation and food-and-drink industries were guilty of falsifying the figures of production, together with price lists and inventories, and that thereby they unjustly secured premiums granted for the accomplishment of the plan (*Pravda*, June 25th and 26th, 1946). The plan, bedizened with all the trappings of dictatorship, has become an infernal hallucination, and its artisans have all the anxious air of victims. Far less exemplary in organizational lessons than the war effort of any of the capitalist countries, the Stalinist plan is fit only to throw still further discredit on Socialism, if Socialists insist obstinately that it constitutes a Socialist achievement.

"Incidentally, whilst they seek to astonish us with a plan tricked out with all the pomp of science and allegedly capable of smoothly regulating the whole life of a country for five years in advance, what do we see? That money, the keystone of all economies, is unmanageable in the hands of the would-be planners; that they are as impotent in that respect as any Minister of blind capitalist finance; that, like the latter, all they can do is introduce a wholesale devaluation every ten years, denounce speculators, and turn

prices upside down at intervals to the great panic of the consumers, as witness the amazing tenfold devaluation at the end of 1947. In fact, Soviet planning is just another deception.

"And how could it well be otherwise? How could reason predominate in an enterprise conceived and executed under the madness of terrorism. An old dictum declares that 'out of discussion springs forth light.' But when dictatorship prohibits all discussion, when popular control is hamstrung by a bureaucratic hierarchy, and criticism silenced by fear, how could it be otherwise that from beginning to end the whole conception were shrouded in darkness? In such circumstances, wrong decisions reveal their fateful consequences only after catastrophe has made them clear, whilst fear or vanity combine to conceal them until they have attained an explosive and desolating character. In Soviet Russia reliance is placed chiefly on the disciplinary virtues: gregarious reflexes, servility and obedience, which have long been preferred to the democratic virtues: personal courage, a critical attitude and individual initiative. Dawning intelligence is throttled by the fear of giving displeasure, or by a desire to please the reigning bureaucrat, who, the following day, may himself be executed as a traitor. It is fear, too, the fear of appearing lukewarm, which incites the economists to exaggerate the production of the technicians, which causes the technicians to inflate the actual production figures, and which then causes the economists to draw up their plans on these false figures—and so it goes on in a vicious circle without end. Fear is the poison which dictatorship distils at all stages of the economic process, a poison to which there is no antidote, for this fear does not refer merely to the loss of simple material advantages, but to the possibility of losing life itself. Atrocious sufferings can suddenly descend on anyone at all, for any reason at all, or none, at the will of one of the innumerable occult and cruel authorities of the central power. The whole atmosphere of fear spreads a veritable psychosis of sabotage everywhere. Threats fill the air, punishments hail down and resentments are paid off. And all the time it is production which suffers. From time to time technical experts, directors and workers are shot out of hand. With the vilest manoeuvres, men seek to protect themselves by outdoing others, and to maintain their positions by calumny. Without popular democracy, a State economy can be nothing but an arena for the conflicting interests, passions and intrigues of bureaucrats."

"I am willingly prepared to admit that dictatorship is not the ideal method for rationalizing the economic system, but one must ask oneself whether the authoritarianism which exists in the Soviet Union is not the result of the youth and inexperience of the régime rather than of its principles. The Russian cadres are still inexperienced, and radical new departures predispose their initiators to an

excess of exaltation and severity. These factors are sufficient to explain the economic wastage to which you refer. Nevertheless, the permanent result of the Russian Revolution will be a collective system of production which, in a more serene atmosphere, will certainly eliminate economic anarchy."

"I cannot agree with you. The excesses to which I have referred are so little the consequence of the youth and inexperience of the régime, and so much the result of its principles, that everything goes to indicate that it will never achieve the superior rationalization it claims. Even if one day despotism actually disappears in Russia—which must not be taken as any excuse for those who are responsible for its existence there at present—but is survived by the régime of bureaucratic appropriation, I still see elements in such a régime which would drive it to disaster, though in a different fashion, just as surely as the anarchy of individual interests drives private capitalism to disaster.

"In the case of private capitalism, economic crises come about owing to the operation of the 'profit motive' which, according to Marx, provokes cyclical crises of 'relative over-production.' In a State economy without democracy, privilege, having shifted its basis from 'profit' to 'office,' and bureaucratic ambitions being subject to no popular control, the agents of the central power will inevitably engage in a 'race for office' just as capitalists inevitably engage in a 'race for profit,' and the logical consequence would be an 'over-administration' analogous to the 'over-production' of anarchical capitalism; both phenomena, in fact, leading to general 'under-consumption.' The embryo of such a process can already be seen in the vast ramifications of Stalinist bureaucracy, whose gravity I underlined in Chapter VII. As we see it now, it is chronic, but perhaps later on it will develop into cyclical crises. One can well conceive, for instance, that the inflation of productive costs by this 'over-administration' needs a certain time before its effects become felt, a time depending on the technical stage of production and the margin at the disposal of the people for meeting increased prices. When finally commodities become too overburdened with the costs of a voracious administrative apparatus, and consumers are compelled to diminish their purchases radically, then a crisis can break out, similar to crises under capitalism, ruining a certain number of bureaucrats and plunging a much greater number of workers into misery until the disequilibrium has been righted, and the process begins all over again. The 'ruin' of the bureaucrats could come about by mass dismissals and mass shootings, as was the case in 1934, 1938 and 1947. But let us leave such prophecies to one side, for I put them forward only as an example. Generally speaking, common sense suggests that the only way to save economic systems from crisis and ruin is to suppress the interests of all

individuals, castes or classes which militate against the collective interests of society, and, further, to end all domination on the part of individuals, castes or classes over the rest of the population. Economic rationalism and political democracy are also indivisible."

"I might agree with you if you did not always envisage democracy in its old traditional form, but in reality the form of democracy necessary for a collectivized economy might well differ profoundly from that. I see it present above all at the cell stage, precisely the stage from which the liberal bourgeoisie excludes it. A newspaper with a big circulation is naturally more an object of commerce than a wall-newspaper. The members of a central parliament are naturally more open to corruption than the delegates of a factory soviet. The suppression of pseudo-deliberating organs on a national scale, and the diffusion of democracy over the productive cells of society surely tend precisely in the direction desired by all Marxists—namely, the government of things instead of the government of men?"

"But first of all Stalin has suppressed democracy just as much at the cell, or point of production, stage as he has on a national scale. And, further, you forget that we are talking of a country already collectivized—that is to say, a society in which no newspaper, either national or local, can any longer be the private property of an individual. And, finally, your thesis is heretical judged by the recent encyclicals of your Pope. Please remember that Stalin has bestowed a Constitution on his people whose chief claim to glory, according to its celebrants, is that it establishes a central parliament elected by the people in place of the old soviet form.

"From its very beginnings, Bolshevism always took up an equivocal attitude towards democracy. Marxist critics, observing faults in the functioning of bourgeois democracy extending even to evils of its very structure, have, not altogether without reason, denounced the manipulation of public opinion by newspaper owners, members of parliament ensnared in demagogy, Ministers in chains to financial powers, and the excessive influence of the bourgeoisie, based on the advantages conferred by riches, compared with popular organizations hampered by poverty. The privilege of fortune falsifies pretended civic equality everywhere, and economic power cynically domesticates political power to its will. In short, Marxist critics contend that bourgeois democracy cannot be real democracy precisely because it is bourgeois.

"The simple and logical conclusion from all this would surely be to bring about the overthrow of the bourgeoisie *in order to install real democracy*, but, instead of making this their aim, the Bolsheviks have sought to discredit the very notion of democracy itself. To some extent, perhaps, they were provoked into this by the impatience which overcame them at the sight of their professional rivals, 'the

reformist bureaucrats,' so comfortably installed within the framework of this false bourgeois democracy. Whatever may be the explanation, the fact is that their attitude has favoured those contacts with Fascist ideology which we have already pointed out in our psychological sketch of the active Stalinist type. By dint of abusing and insulting 'degenerate democracy,' they have let the democratic ideal itself degenerate. Instead of attacking the causes of the evil they, so to speak, tip the baby out with the bath water. No more elected members of parliament, they cry; no more variety in the Press; no more parties; no more Ministers quibbling with parliaments; no more parliaments! That is an easy and radical solution—but it is a Fascist one. The real solution is exactly the opposite: we must demand more free newspapers, more disinterested parties, more honest deputies, more devoted Ministers, and more capable parliaments. That is the difficult and progressive solution, but it can spell our salvation. In practical terms, we must free the economic complex from private egoism, destroy those powers which, thanks to their money, are able to pay for propaganda, and then give society as a whole its head by means of unconditional democracy. Certainly we must suppress the falsifiers of democracy, but we must equally certainly not destroy democracy itself. And to cut short all further argument I will define democracy as being readily recognizable by one infallible sign; *the existence of a free opposition to the ruling government.*"

"The more I listen to you the more I come to the conclusion that, despite your frequent references to Marx, you are, in fact, an idealist. I even ask myself if you are not attempting to resuscitate the famous Utopian Socialism so popular at the beginning of the nineteenth century, for by what else apart from a pious hope can you justify giving 'society as a whole its head,' as you say, before it has enough to eat and is therefore able to talk? Your solution agreeably flatters the ear of the sophisticated, but I still prefer the Russian solution: seeing themselves saddled with responsibility for a vast and backward country, they courageously set to work to modernize it as rapidly as possible, without pretending that each step they took was in time with the music, or each action in accord with the ideal. The present Soviet generation realizes that all formulas of liberty and equality are empty words so long as the Russian *mujik* still pulls the plough in harness, and it has decided with a rugged grandeur more favourable to history than all the doubts of the doctors of democracy, to sacrifice its own happiness, and even its liberty, in order that its sons and daughters should one day be in a position to practise democracy."

"Hm. Pardon me, but I realize that I do not give you the floor often enough. When you do take it you certainly make the sparks fly. That thunderous offensive suddenly transfers us to a different

basis, that of the famous 'sacrificed generation.' To allow me time to recover, let me begin once again with my little exercise in platonic polemics, and demonstrate that your theses mutually destroy each other."

"If the present Soviet generation is being sacrificed—let us leave the question of whether it is sacrificing itself voluntarily or not until later—it obviously cannot be happily situated with regard to the material enjoyments of life. Thus, who is right, may I ask? You or Stalin, since he claims that the Soviet Union is (present indicative of the verb 'to be') the country of enthusiastic, free, happy and prosperous workers, whilst you contend that those same workers are bracing their muscles in a superhuman effort, grinding their teeth under the dictatorship, and tightening their belts in penury—in order that their children may one day be happy? Thus we start off by striking a happy note and pretending that well-being reigns in Moscow, and if no one protests we bow low to the applause. But if someone comes along and demonstrates all too clearly that what reigns in Moscow is far from well-being, then we are not in the least disturbed, and we strike the heroic note instead, declaring that the masses, who but a moment before were living in ease and enjoying the good things of life, are exerting and sacrificing themselves in a supreme effort—and we bow low again to the next round of applause. The duplicity of such propaganda is so shocking that it embarrasses me to pursue the subject until you have chosen, once and for all, what line you propose to take. If you plump for 'the sacrificed generation,' will you be prepared to admit henceforth that the Russian workers enjoy neither well-being nor liberty?"

"Very well. I admit it."

"Good. Then let us deal directly with your argument of 'the sacrificed generation'—an argument most favoured by those defenders of the Soviet Union who are not members of that unfortunate generation, and one which raises the gravest political implications."

"If men had not been trained by an ancestral religion to hold themselves and their well-being so lightly, the very thought of a sacrificed generation would shock them. It would be obvious to them that civilization has no teacher but itself, that, like light, it springs from flame and not from ashes, and that, further, the flame is feeble enough to need the encouraging breath of each epoch, each decade, each stratum of society, indeed, each citizen, if it is to remain alive; that each interruption in human progress carries a peril rather than a promise; and that if poverty and slavery plough under a whole generation then its successor must invariably be a generation both indigent and enslaved."

"Marxists like you ought to hold such truths as particularly

evident. Was it not Marx himself who demonstrated that the ideology of a society is determined by the living conditions of the people? By what miracle do you suppose that a prolonged period of dictatorship and poverty could bring forth democracy and well-being? Obviously such a dictatorship and such poverty imply a ruling class which exercises the one and imposes the other. I cannot imagine anyone believing the fairy story of a whole people who for thirty years, ceaselessly, voluntarily and enthusiastically, wear a muzzle and go about in chains. You are prepared to admit the existence of such rulers, but you insist, I know, that they should be regarded as simple delegates appointed to the function of overseers by the galley slaves themselves, overseers who will politely lay aside their raw-hide whips as soon as it becomes no longer necessary for their charges to pull so hard.

"But surely that is a strange belief for a historical dialectical materialist to hold? When the bourgeoisie is involved you insist that a ruling class always seeks to perpetuate its powers, and that it will never consent to abandon them willingly to the class it rules over. Why do you suppose, therefore, that the situation will be any different with regard to Stalin's bureaucrats? Are they beings of a different species in whose sacred bowels the laws you have discerned with such perspicacity in human history have ceased to operate, age-old laws which bind the privileged as closely to their privileges as the disinherited to their slavery? What guarantee have you that the masters to whom a whole generation has abandoned the advantages of exclusive power, together with golden rewards, will not seek to conserve and perpetuate such privileges, and transmit them to their descendants, instead of immolating themselves on the altar of high and idealistic principle?

"In accusing me of being an idealist, I fear that you have completely reversed the meaning of terms. You call yourself a materialist because you limit the immediate effort of Socialism to constructions of brick and metal, because you judge a régime by its factories, and estimate its works by weight, and you call me an idealist because I feel disturbed at the fate which has been reserved to an object which is not reducible to the level of piston rods and crank shafts, namely the human being himself, desirous that his reasonable aspirations should be satisfied. As though the human substance was not every bit as material as that of a machine, and far more primordial! But you, the singers of a sacrificed generation, who are obliged to place all your hopes on the future good-will of those who sacrifice that generation now; you who make the happiness of the ruled depend on the fidelity of their rulers to ideals which are, after all, so much inclined to go under without trace in the whirlpool of practical tasks; you who subordinate the liberty of all to the supposed virtue of the few—do you not realize that you

have turned your backs on materialism? I do not know whether the primacy I accord to well-being and liberty is idealistic or not, but at least I am quite certain that your presumed progress by the immolation of present generations is based on the least defensible of idealistic illusions.

"By associating materialism with the rugged, palpable and ponderous character of natural principles certain idealists have thought to discredit it in the eyes of serious thinkers, but in reality materialist philosophy has nothing to do with the sensual appearance of the causes of phenomena. It consists simply in studying such phenomena methodically; in consulting them instead of merely babbling; in seeking to lay bare their laws behind the traces they leave in our sense and in our spirits; and in setting our objectives and measuring our truths against them. Now, the fundamental object of our political struggles is to obtain the greatest good for the greatest number of our contemporaries, and the first conditions of that good reside in well-being and liberty. It is thus strictly materialist to place the control of available riches in the hands of the majority of people—and to let them have their heads. Certainly I do not deny that I see still farther into the future, that I set ultimate aims to the adventure such as the development of a society without classes and without coercion, but for that I am prepared to wait wisely until humanity, once master of its destiny, should show itself agreeable to my formulas. And in this respect allow me to say that I am not only the greater materialist, but also the greater realist. It is truly presumptuous, and also typically Utopian, to sacrifice a whole generation to the presumed certainty that a doctrine which holds sway in our own minds at the moment will equally enchant our grandchildren and inevitably come about."

"You are running away with yourself—and, what is more serious, into the tortuous byways of philosophy."

"I am quite prepared to leave them, for, after all, I am not greatly concerned to discover in just what category the gentlemen who are prepared to sacrifice a whole generation place themselves in relation to this or that philosophical label, and I freely confess that if it can be demonstrated that I am an idealist because I seek to deprive them of their victim I shall be well content to be an idealist. It is of these victims in fact that I now propose to speak.

"On a number of occasions I have already referred to that degeneration of Socialism into a cynical and violent doctrine, which is no doubt the result of those excesses provoked by Marxism in applying for the first time the 'cold' analysis of science to human societies. On the other hand, the fallacies and cowardice of the democratic bourgeoisie exasperate both the extreme wings, the Right and the Left; and from that exasperation Fascism and Leninism were born, later on to develop into Nazism and Stalinism.

Common foes produce common feelings. The two camps rally the impatient and, in consequence, the cruel. Their methods have complemented each other to the point of becoming similar: the regimented Fascists mix with the people; the Communist friends of the people preach discipline. The former aim of well-being for all is replaced by the law above all. It was thus that the fatal exaltation of our present age was born: that of social severity. The mythology of 'strong men' misleads reformers. The trumpeting of the 'strong men' poison the spirit of the age. The energy of the 'strong men' seduces the people, and their conspiracy fills the graveyards.

• "An urgent task at the moment is to treat these 'strong men' with the ridicule they deserve, for the obscure passion which moves them is nothing but a survival of the slave-holding mentality: the worshipping of violence without consideration for the weak; of efficiency without regard for the cost; of action without regard for thought; and, finally—oh, ill-advised Lenin!—without regard to the means. But Socialism above all should reside essentially in the means.

"The respective contributions of Hitlerism and Stalinism to the atrocious mortification of the masses in the very century in which they were at last permitted to voice their feelings are not, by the way, symmetrical, for Socialism suffers in consequence whilst Fascism waxes fat. No; it is high time that we made an end of Socialism of blood and iron and restored Socialism of flesh and blood."

"You are very categorical just where many a sage spirit begins to consider that a little rigidity is desirable in great enterprises. You seem to forget that egoism has strong roots in human nature, which perhaps does not tend spontaneously towards its own perfection, and that the essential virtue which morality teaches us to venerate, and without which even the practice of good excites no admiration, is sacrifice."

"You oblige me at this point to enter into a new digression in order to return to the basis of ethics.

"If we question moral systems about the ideal they profess to serve—consciously or not—instead of the rules they seek to impose, we discover that not one of them has ever pursued any other aim but the well-being of the individual and even, more precisely, his happiness—to employ a more biological and therefore more compromising term. The total surrender of everything is not preached by Buddhism as an end or value in itself, but as a means of escape from the greater sufferings of passion, and as a means of attaining beatitude. If Christianity pushes its mortification of the flesh to the crown of martyrdom, it is because it professes in this way to further the salvation of the soul, which it declares more important than the salvation of the body. It aims at subduing the

flesh, not for the sake of subduing the flesh, but in order to attain the most ambitious of all felicities: eternal happiness. And in social morality it is even easier to see that fundamentally disciplinary precepts justify themselves only as instruments of a surer joy: man must work in order to create works, but works are necessary in order that the citizen may enjoy them. A citizen must restrain himself in order to preserve the share of others, but the share of others must be preserved in order that his share, too, may be preserved.

"For the rest, it is quite inevitable that the finality of all moral codes should be euphoric. To talk of an end which embraces an ideal of life is senseless unless the practices which serve it are compatible with life. This simple consideration of good sense shows that suffering cannot be an ideal end, because to realize it without compunction and without mercy would lead to the destruction of humanity altogether. Pleasure, on the contrary, can repeat itself and become systematic without necessarily coming into contradiction with human existence.

"But if pleasure is the sole conceivable object of morality, and if analysis discovers it at the source of all ethics, how can we explain the circumstance that ethics condemn pleasure to play such a scandalous role? Here concealed lies one of the most redoubtable traps of this human adventure of ours.

"Man, who desires well-being and happiness, is a weak animal, but an industrious one. He has joined together with his like in an organism best suited to protect him against Nature and most apt to develop his gifts: society. But, as we have already said, when society is poor it must, if it is to exist at all, impose rigid rules of renunciation on those very citizens whose interests it exists to further. And here we can observe how the tragedy developed: the purpose of such rules was soon forgotten, and they became worshipped as ends in themselves. Society, which should have been only an instrument, became an idol and, in consequence, a tyranny. It is the eternal story of the weapons forged to defend ideals, taking the place of those very ideals in the hearts of those who forged them; of the parties created to liberate their members ending by becoming their masters; of the machines invented to serve mankind ending by enslaving mankind.

"And to the extent that society forgot the individual joy and happiness it was founded to serve and develop, its morality loaded the pleasure principle with opprobrium. Instead of seeking to magnify man, society sought instead to subjugate him. Its heroic injunctions, its exhortations to abstinence, and its gregarious exactions weighed so heavily on him that in the end he fell victim to a sort of conditional reflex: it was enough for him to hear the word 'renunciation' and he translated it at once by 'virtue.'

However, the example of the Fascist régimes has just given us a particularly striking demonstration of the truth that not all sacrifice necessarily leads to wisdom; despite the dominance of the severer virtues (obedience, courage and self-immolation), they spread nothing but evil.

"In rehabilitating the euphoric aspirations of mankind at last, Socialist doctrine finds itself in admirable harmony with its economic programme. The obligation to return the totality of wealth produced to the totality of those who produce it, translates exactly on the social plan that moral rule which provides that the willing efforts of the individual shall profit his own development. To render the product to the worker, and to place the energies consumed in the observance of the law in the service of happiness are the two aspects, economic and moral, of the same regeneration: the regeneration of man.

"But, believe me, it is not necessary to have discovered the secret of the moral law in order to condemn the sacrifice of the present generation in Russia. It is enough to be able to unmask demagoguery. Consider, they pretend to be the friends of the people; they bemoan their hard lot; they applaud their immediate demands—so long as they are directed against the bourgeoisie; they pocket their votes; they raise themselves to power on their bent backs, but no sooner are they themselves installed in office than they rummage around in the sack and produce a vulgar Spartan ideology furbished with a little red paint, and then 'turn the screw' more vigorously and more persistently than those they replaced ever did. They take 5 million poor wretches rooted in the soil by all their fibres, each one quite as valuable for human progress as Marshal Joseph Stalin, and in two years they turn them first into harassed convicts, then into wandering skeletons, then into corpses. After that they put 2 million bureaucrats, newly trained in the propaganda centres of the party and in the G.P.U., on to the vacant land, and proceed to denounce as idle petty-bourgeois dreamers all those who refuse to recognize their action as a Socialist operation. It astonishes me that you can be so insensible as not to cry sacrilege when they condemn 50 million workers and their wives and children for a quarter of a century to overcrowding, dirt, rags, exhaustion, hunger and torture. Stalinists seek to justify these calamities by fine theories now they are in power. Did they make any mention of such calamities before inviting the people to give them power?

"And what strange mathematics are brutally invoked in the service of humanity? If one has the right to kill 20 million people now in order to be able to feed 200 million later, why should it not be right to kill 200 million people later in order to be able to feed 500 million people still later, and so on *ad infinitum* until the whole destiny of man is to die for the greater happiness of those

who are to come after? Inversely, by the same mathematics, it would be wrong to risk the lives of ten firemen to save two children from the flames.

"Nothing is more revealing than to compare the callousness the sacrificial high priests show to the men and women of their own day with the solicitude they assure us they feel for the unborn foetuses of the future. The key to the mystery is that the Stalinists, like the Nazis, are humanitarian by demagogy and misanthropic by temperament and love only future generations, which, by being as yet unborn, are not in a position to diminish their magnificence.

"Whilst elementary reflection should convince us that Socialism has nothing to expect from a sacrificed generation but corpses, how does it come about that we think so little of what a chosen and happy generation might produce? Your idea that in order to arrive at Socialism we must first pass through misery reminds me of that apophthegm still going strong after about 2,000 years: 'If you want peace, prepare for war.' Experience has shown in vain that armaments never succeed in preventing wholesale massacres, but rather lead to them; we have not yet arrived at the truth that it would be more rational, and much more attractive, to say: 'If you want peace, prepare for peace.'

"Why should not Socialism devote itself to making the life of present generations flourish, rather than pretend to fashion the life of generations yet to come of whose views we can know nothing, though we may suspect that whilst they may love us for our flowers, they will surely curse us for our cruelties?

"And can you not see that the ideas you propose for Socialism are nothing but the myths of a new religion? Your ideal, which is always to-morrow, your to-morrow always avid of sacrifices from our to-day, are the worthy successors of that paradise we must merit by martyrdom, and of those gods we must propitiate by blood. What a tragic mockery to see Socialism, hewn in the first place from the noblest marbles of human reason, end up its career as a vulgar Moloch of clay merely daubed with modernist colours! In one of his weaker moments, Voltaire declared: 'A people must have a religion.' You replace his adage by saying, 'A people must have an ideal,' but in the background the implication in both cases is: 'in order to hoax them.' No; the real needs of a people and its real mission are of a much simpler nature, and for my part I propose to sum them up in a sentence: to be equal to their rulers.

"Throughout the ages men have become accustomed to regarding society only as a sort of stern, fierce and bearded judge. One of the first tasks of Socialism is to give the State a smiling aspect. Have you never thought what a tremendous leap forward humanity would make if the State at last dedicated its energies to putting a chicken into each pot, and giving culture to each spirit; if its

prime efforts were directed to giving light and health to each home, providing each citizen with good clothes, encouraging each brain to develop the critical spirit?

"And please don't run away with the idea that I am preaching some sort of bucolic and primitive Socialism. I strictly reject the 'back to Nature' ideology, for I believe that all civilization can be defined as the love of man for his works. I approve of science, machinery and towns. I believe in human progress, and not even Stalin has succeeded in making me doubt it. But I do desire that the sciences, the machines and the towns should cease to be anthropophagic idols, and begin at last to play the one role in which they can magnify man and be magnified in their turn: the role of instruments in the hands of the living for the greater glory of life, instruments of the mind for the realization of spiritual satisfactions, instruments in the hands of the body politic for the well-being and happiness of its individual members. I approve that my generation should build dams, construct factories and electrify the countryside, but peaceably, reasonably and according to its proper needs—I might almost say in serenity and happiness. And I insist that dams, factories and power stations built in this spirit would be a hundred times more beautiful, and ten times more efficient, than anything which can be created under a harsh dictatorship."

"A little while back you condemned the Bolsheviks as impatient, but I must say that in this respect you could give them points and a beating. I will quote you only one example, but a weighty one—that of the late war, in which we were saved by the Russians. If Stalin had listened to you and concentrated Soviet industry on the manufacture of consumption goods instead of tanks, you would right at this moment have plenty of leisure to consider the primacy of well-being over heavy industry—in a Nazi concentration camp."

"Well, thank you at least for supposing me in prison instead of on the side of the prison warders, which is doubtless where the official Stalinist commentators would be. In principle, however, I will say first of all that the merit of having vanquished Hitler by the blood of millions of people does not compensate for the fault of failing to prevent his rise to power by the non-violent methods of politics. And in fact the lack of consumption goods, or, to be more exact, the indifference to the living standards of the masses which that lack indicates, is the reflection of a whole policy which takes no account of man and his freedom and considers only the convenience of the Russian State and the caprices of its head, a policy which must necessarily engender just such criminal errors both in domestic affairs and in international strategy. It is a remote but perfectly logical consequence of the cruelties of Stalinist industrialization that the masses of the German workers were misled by the Communist International into rejecting a united

front with the German democratic parties against Hitlerism in favour of reinforcing the Nazi votes with their own, thus making themselves co-responsible for Hitler's victory. And, more generally, the evidence of Soviet misery and slavery (it is impossible to over-stress this point) discredited Socialism to such a degree that it compromised the victory of the anti-Fascist forces all over the world and paved the way for the triumph of Nazi bestiality. Finally, it must not be forgotten that the Soviet Union contributed every bit as much to the unleashing of the war as it did to its victorious conclusion; whilst its crimes—the alliance with Hitler, the partitioning of Poland, and the defection from the anti-Fascist front at the most crucial moment of all—were all consequences on the diplomatic field of the rupture of the Soviet régime with the ideals of humanity.

"In the chapter devoted to the Red Army, I have sought to show that it is an illusion to impute a leading role to Soviet industrial production prior to 1940 in the final victory of 1945. Like the other Allied Powers, the Soviet Union had to create the essential part of its armaments during the war itself and under enemy pressure. Although in 1940 the Russians had less, much less, butter than the citizens of bourgeois democratic States, it was not because they possessed any more guns, or that much more armaments. All in all, the other Allied Powers were quite as well equipped as, if not better equipped than, Soviet Russia, and that without having oppressed, enslaved and exhausted their workers for decades, and without plunging them into the depths of misery and terror in which we have seen them writhing in Soviet Russia.

"In this respect let me warn you against certain over-simplifications beloved of those who have a liking for burning incense to the glory of the great pontiffs of history. The credit for progress is often given to these latter although, in fact, such progress is due in reality to circumstances, to an already acquired momentum, or to the natural virtues immanent in humanity. In this way capitalism is often given credit for the development of technique, whereas in reality it was simply grafted on to that inevitable development. In the same way it is quite possible that Russia defeated Germany not thanks to Stalinism, but despite Stalinism. A simple bourgeois democratic régime—in fact, any national régime determined to defend the country against foreign attack—would have devoted itself more persistently and more humanely to the military tasks involved, and would, in the last resort, have performed them at least as efficiently as the Stalinist dictatorship.

"Incidentally, we have done the Soviet Fuehrer far too much honour. For an hour perhaps we have debated the profoundest problems of human destiny on his account although in reality he represents the most banal form of despotism. We have discussed

the highest preoccupations of Socialism on his account whilst, in fact, he devotes himself to a vulgar tyranny. We are over tolerant to discuss so gravely and before an academy of honest men, a case which by right should occupy the attention of a simple magistrate. In this respect, I confess, we have fallen victim to the bad habit condemned by Montesquieu: 'The crimes of the subject are condemned and visited with punishments; princes can be punished only by their remorse, and everything is done to assuage that.' Where the great of this world are concerned the public shows a wealth of scientific scruples, a psychological generosity and a political delicacy which contrast painfully with the stern judgment, hasty to the point of cruelty, it passes on the little offenders. An act, which if committed by a modest citizen would inevitably and without discussion provoke scandal and bring down opprobrium on the offender, cannot be judged if it is committed by a ruler before it has been discussed and analysed solemnly in a dozen and one ways by a hundred learned doctors of philosophy.

"It is high time that we opened our hearts to the pressing needs of the humble and closed our minds to the interested ratiocinations of the powerful. It is high time that we began to judge our rulers rather by what they do than by their pretences. It is high time that we learnt that above all programmes, tactics and disputes there reigns the truth of facts.

"It is on truth alone that man can count to tear aside the shroud of prejudice and break the chains of oppression. As the flower secretes pollen, so Socialism should dispense the truth. Truth should be its sharp sword and strong shield, the inspiration of its doctrine, and the fruit of its struggles. Long before it begins to plan, long before it begins to industrialize, and even before it brings about the revolution, the natural and exalted mission of Socialism is to raze the castle of fiction and overthrow the citadel of lies, and to teach humanity to recognize a tyrant in a tyrant. The pious lie should have no more grace in its eyes than the interested lie. Civilization, one of whose profoundest traits is to dominate both material and spiritual phenomena, demands that the nature of society shall be known, and knowledge demands that truth shall be expressed. First of all, we must examine what actually is. Secondly, we must say outright what actually is. And then we can discuss and interpret it.

"Firstly and secondly, *the Russian people are subject to a tyranny.*

"Yet what do many Socialists and Communists bring up to restrain us on this path of truth? That we should condemn all criticism of the Soviet Union in concert with the reaction, even if the criticism is just. But those who think that such a coincidence of attack is unfitting were not so delicate during the war. They were perfectly willing then to work and fight hand in hand with

capitalism—and even with Nazi Germany. And as far as Socialist solidarity in face of the reaction is concerned, it would be more to the point if the Stalinists showed a little of it, instead of dragging every working-class action into the mud the moment it deviates by so much as a hair's breadth from their precious 'Line.' Or has Destiny granted them the inalienable right always to attack and insult others without a soul answering them in their turn?

"They even contend that to tell the truth about Soviet Russia is to go even farther than keeping company with the reaction, that it actually serves the reaction. But in reality nothing is worse than to try to hide a cancer, particularly when it is developing clearly in full view of the enemy. Nothing could possibly better serve the cause of the reaction than for Socialism, by its silence, shameful or simply embarrassed, to tolerate the caricature of itself which is being made in Moscow. For twenty years now the Stalinist dictatorship has insidiously hampered the development of progressive and liberal thought by the miscredit it has brought upon the banner of Socialism by claiming it as its own. To-day, when the Soviet Union is intervening in the affairs of the world, the peril is greater than ever. Having already compromised progressive ideals, it now threatens to mislead the progressive forces which represent the only hope of saving civilization. If men follow a falsified Socialism, they will end in barbarism just as certainly as though they preserved a retrograde capitalism. It would be tragic if humanity were eternally incapable of saving itself from one evil except by appealing to passions which must plunge it at once into another. And that is why, despite all the propriety of love and admiration for the heroic people of Russia, I hold it vital to reveal and propagate the truth: the truth that they are groaning under a tyranny.

"Others frankly admit that Stalinism too often denies the Socialist ideal, but deny the possibility of doing better in Russia. I cannot accept that argument as legitimate. No serious study of the problem permits us to say that the society taken over by the Bolsheviks in 1917 did not deserve a treatment less barbarous or more favourable to human progress. Certainly, the difficulties created by the ignorance of the masses, the backward state of industry, and the hostility of the capitalist world were tremendous, but equally certainly there was room for an economy prudently progressive and designed to feed the Russian people, and, above all, there was room for a humane and liberal government.

"There was no inevitability in what actually happened at all. Do you mean to tell us that it was quite impossible to avoid slaughtering *en masse* the fine body of thinkers and fighters who made the revolution? That it was quite impossible not to promulgate the shameful law of hostages, or to introduce the death sentence for children twelve years old? That it was impossible to deal with

famished gleaners in any other way but by shooting them? That it was quite impossible to avoid slaughtering 5 million peasants? That it was impossible to avoid the artificial creation of a terrible famine? That it was impossible to dig canals without the use of convict labour? That it was impossible to erect factories without marshalling an army of slaves? That it was impossible to maintain the modest standards of life which existed in 1914 and 1928? That it was impossible not to organize a massacre amongst the leading cadres of the country every few years? That it was impossible for the ruler of Soviet Russia not to make himself both feared and adored like a Pharaoh of ancient Egypt? That it was impossible for the police to track down offenders without the denunciation of fathers by their sons and husbands by their wives? That it was impossible for Soviet judges to hold the scales of justice evenly? That it was impossible for citizens of the Soviet Union not to debase their human dignity by bearing false witness? That it was impossible for the rulers of Soviet Russia not to intrigue, to lie, to exploit and terrorise their subjects? That it was impossible for them not to keep on threatening, imprisoning, deporting and killing? That it was impossible not to perpetuate an atmosphere of fear and horror? Really, you overload the broad back of Destiny.

"But, in any case, all these retrospective speculations are out of place. The plea of inevitability is only one of the many traps rulers set for public opinion. It could be used to whitewash any régime, including Hitler's. If the people permit the evils from which they suffer to be blamed on to an inevitable fate then they will never secure an amelioration of their lot. It is clear that no one can know whether any particular epoch could have had other leaders than those it in fact had, but it is evident enough that in most epochs better things could have been done than were actually done by those leaders.

"Naïve scruples about the good faith of such leaders belong in the same category of ambiguities. Viewed from within their own minds, all statesmen, including Stalin and Hitler, are perhaps sincere. But that does not prevent their actions being censurable or requiring rectification. All these problems of the possible and the impossible in events, of the purity or impurity of individual intentions, are insoluble. And even if in the future science finds it possible to solve them that must not stifle the critical spirit or hamper the desire for reform. They do not change one iota of that atrocious reality which it is our duty to combat: *the Russian people are groaning under a tyranny.*

"And now, my dear fellow, after our pleasant chat there remains only one question for me to ask you—a simple question, but a

crucial one. It is addressed not only to you, but through you to all your comrades in Communism or Socialism, and to all those who are inspired by an honest and noble ideal of social emancipation.

"Why are you a Stalinist? And why are you such a fanatical Stalinist?

"If doctrines, men, régimes and political actions pass before your eyes without dazzling you and robbing you of your critical faculties and without intimidating you, how does it come about that you are suddenly blinded when the Soviet régime is in question? How is it that you cannot see that then you overturn all your most praiseworthy standards of value, that your brilliant rationalism suddenly becomes rank with sophisms, that your generous and liberal ideology begins to secrete cynicism, and that your heart begins to harden and turn cruel? Why is it that you suddenly see no harm in the worst quibbles as soon as the least condemnation of the Soviet régime bids fair to obtain a foothold in public opinion—and, above all, in your own mind? Where was it ever laid down that he who dreams in the twentieth century of the abolition of exploitation and oppression must never say a single word against that heavily moustachioed man who was born in Georgia in 1879?

"Is it the appeal he makes to your capacities which makes you spread them out before him in such a docile fashion? Do you still allow yourself to be deceived by his apparent verbal continuity with the revolution which carried him to power? Are you still content to regard him as your friend merely because he shares some of your enemies?

"At the bottom of your heart—very much at the bottom of your heart—a voice has certainly made itself heard in condemnation of more than one of his undertakings. When you first read that Stalin had invaded Finland, your conscience must have murmured that the Soviet Union was committing an act of aggression. When you observe Stalin adulated like a god, your sense of liberty must whisper secretly that in reality Stalin is a tyrant. And when you see the Stalinist Press so rigorously synchronized, your critical faculties must cry out within you that the Soviet Press is lying. Why, then, have you brought yourself to suppress your accusations rather than shout them out loud? Do you fear the insults and the calumnies with which Stalin's Press and Stalin's faithful would overwhelm you if you dared to leave their rut? Do you fear perhaps that in admitting the irremediable antinomy between Stalinism and Socialism you would have to revise the whole fund of your beliefs and your enthusiasms?

"If you do you are wrong again. Stalinism is a tyranny, but nevertheless your beliefs and your ideals are not false. Refuse to allow your principles to be betrayed in the belief that it is all in a good cause. Your beliefs are more valuable than the usurpers.

When your private scruples and the interests of Stalin clash, then let the former prevail. It is Stalin who is in debt to Socialism, not you to Stalin. Recognize the truth whilst there is still time: in any case, you will not be able to resist it in the long run. Sooner or later—with benefit if it is sooner, in misfortune if it is later—you will be compelled to recognize that the Russian steam-roller is not rolling towards human progress.

“And after all, what use is there in your running along behind it? It is quite understandable that the Communists of the revolutionary years refused to admit that the new world of which they felt themselves the artisans could degenerate irremediably. But what tragedy would there be in it if you, the generation of this war who will be responsible for the civilization of to-morrow, now rubbed your eyes and awoke at last from a too protracted psychosis and recognized what actually is?

“Soviet Russia, particularly after its victory in the war, has become a powerful State with privileged groups and exploited classes, police, armies, national interests and lies. It no longer has any need of you except as a humble auxiliary to its diplomatic organs abroad; and you have no more to learn from it, except perhaps from its revolutionary past, and that it has betrayed. On the contrary, in breaking with the Stalinist régime, you will feel invigorated after the first shock, rejuvenated and happy at last to have cast off a mortgage which has weighed so terribly on the social progress of the past twenty years.

“Your culture is highly developed; Russian propaganda is primitive. Your aspirations are upright; the proceedings of Stalin are tortuous. Your ideal is humane; the methods of the G.P.U. are bestial. By the thoroughness with which you have cast off the prejudices of the old world, by the courage with which you have faced a new experience, by the selflessness with which you struggle, by the love of human progress which exalts you, you belong to the élite of our time. And it is that which makes it all the more tragic that you should still show fidelity to the squalor and ugliness of Stalinism. Rejoin the association of free men. Tied to Russian Stalinism, you will become the accomplice of a new Fascism. Returned to your ideals and your independence, you will contribute to the saving of civilization.

“Before you is the whole martyred and tormented world, calling for your assistance to extricate it from the mire. All you need do is recover your liberty to find the solutions which humanity awaits. Refuse to concern yourself any longer with the interests of Moscow, and settle down to the task before you, the task of giving your own country and your own epoch the basis of a rational and humane society. Your thinkers were over-neglectful of the structure of the régime they desired. Here alone is a magnificent field for the

operation of your creative imagination. Democracy has need of new forms adapted to modern life, to the great increase in populations, to the increasing complexity of technique, to the great increase in human wealth. It needs new social inventions to realize that synthesis of social organization and individual liberty which is the most important problem modern history raises. Social organization without individual liberty is tyranny, and tyranny ends by dislocating the social organization; liberty without organization is anarchy, and anarchy ends by deforming liberty. Thus each of these two things on its own turns in the end against itself to the misfortune of mankind, and therefore they must be intimately associated at all times and in every human undertaking. Stalinism has no lesson for us in the performance of that great task, except perhaps to serve as an example of what we must avoid.

"If the forces of the past prove unwilling to make way for the advent of reason, then perhaps we shall have to accept the necessity of revolution, but in that case it will be your duty to control its course with care, and to see to it that revolution magnifies those who were formerly oppressed rather than merely oppressing those who were formerly on high.

"And do not believe that you are obliged to go at once to extremes. Perhaps at first it may be wise—in order to perfect your science of government by practical experience—not to socialize more than the key industries, and not to introduce collectivization into the countryside without the willing consent of peasants won over by the tangible advantages of co-operative models. Public instruction requires a thorough modernization of pedagogical methods, and, above all, a tremendous expansion of the educational network. We must cease to regard individual security as a condescending alms and raise it into the common treasure of society as a whole. And above all, we must efface those stifling frontiers and those multi-coloured nationalistic splashes which make the map of the world look like a diagram of a skin disease. Nationalist prejudices must be overcome. We must preach the fusion of all peoples, all races and all tongues—in short, we must devote ourselves without further loss of time to the task of tasks: the unification of the world.

"If you once liberate yourself from the Stalinist myth that is the great task which awaits you.

"You have nothing to lose but your chains; you have a world to win."

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A REVIEW OF THE FRENCH EDITION:

"We were already in possession of a great number of documents. Suzanne Labin's book is the sum total of all these partial studies, and a methodical recapitulation, as it were, of all the factual knowledge we have obtained about the terror of a police state, the omnipotence of the Stalin bureaucracy and the N.K.V.D., the real standard of living of the working classes, the running of the press, the Trade Unions, literature, the voting system and the functioning of 'the most democratic constitution in the world'. This alone would be sufficient to confer the *Grand Prix* on *Stalin's Russia*.

"But, in another sense, it is a work of complete originality.

"Suzanne Labin has not merely been content to collect all the evidence to which we have referred above . . . She has used extensively another source of information; and the most fanatic admirers of the bolshevik régime would find difficulty in contesting its value: she has simply quoted numerous extracts from official documents, laws, decrees, circulars, and the Soviet press . . .

"To the best of our knowledge, no one has ever before consummated a study on the Russian régime by means of this analysis, which is, nevertheless, so necessary. It is for this in particular that we are grateful to Suzanne Labin."—*Populaire* (Robert Verdier).